

Protest Images, Collective Portraits

Maria Madalena Túbal Miranda

Tese de Doutoramento em Media Digitais

Ramo de Criação de Audiovisuais e Conteúdos Interativos

(versão corrigida)

Maio, 2020

Tese apresentada para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Doutor
em Media Digitais, Criação de Conteúdos Audiovisuais e Interativos,
realizada sob a orientação científica de Professor Doutor João Mário Grilo.

Apoio financeiro da FCT e do FSE no âmbito do III Quadro Comunitário de Apoio.



Para o Eduardo, “Menino de Abril”
e para a Sofia, “Pele de Verão”,
que me abraçam a rir e me perguntam:
“Então mãe, já acabaste a tese?”

AGRADECIMENTOS

No final desta etapa, quero agradecer àqueles que me acompanharam neste caminho, por vezes firme, por vezes vacilante.

Quero agradecer ao meu orientador, o Professor Doutor João Mário Grilo, a sua presença segura ao longo deste processo, cujo pensamento exigente e generoso me fez resistir e procurar horizontes mais além.

Ao Professor Nuno Correia agradeço o interesse e a disponibilidade para esta projecto, assim como ao Daniel Cruz, por ter aceite integrar na sua investigação de Mestrado em Engenharia Informática, parte do desenvolvimento deste trabalho. Também aos meus colegas agradeço a companhia durante este processo.

Ao pessoal da FCSH, a minha primeira casa académica, desde a cantina aos serviços académicos, que me recebe sempre ao longo dos anos, com simpatia e cumplicidade. Agradeço ainda aos amigos, colegas, investigadores e professores desta Faculdade, com quem me vou cruzando, em especial do Departamento de Ciências da Comunicação e do Instituto de História Contemporânea, pela partilha e pela pertença.

Aos amigos para além da tese, que me fizeram rir e respirar. À “Broa”, amiga de quatro patas e aos nossos passeios no jardim. Aos “avós Nandos” pelo carinho e pela biblioteca sempre disponível. Agradeço aos meus pais, que acreditam sempre que eu sou capaz e me ensinaram a importância de querer aprender. Ao João, pelo amor e pela partilha quotidiana, com humor, música e telepatias. Ao Eduardo e à Sofia, por todas as razões.

PROTEST IMAGES, COLLECTIVE PORTRAITS

Maria Madalena Túbal Miranda

[RESUMO]

A aparência é uma instância política, uma vez que a representação coletiva é uma possibilidade de emancipação da comunidade, dos “povos” (Didi-Huberman, 2012) e um mecanismo de constituição de memória cultural. A possibilidade de aparência, que também participa da história coletiva é uma relação de poder em si mesma. Na cultura digital, a aparência global banalizou-se, mas também foi dissolvida sob um regime tecnológico digital de produção visual, de “imagem de massa” (Cubitt, 2016). A imaterialidade, a obsolescência programada, as versões de software disponibilizado e a dependência para produzir e criar visualidades sob a influência de regimes corporativos globais, que organizam sistemas e tecnologias, tornam esta afirmação paradoxal e problemática para uma constituição coletiva dessas representações, correndo o risco de mercantilizar a memória. Apesar disso, tem havido uma ligação entre técnicas culturais e memória, onde a “ideologia californiana” (Barbrook, 1999) organiza a cultura digital, num equilíbrio entre uma “cultura participativa” e um “empreendedorismo neoliberal”. No entanto, nunca uma quantidade tão grande de imagens foi produzida e partilhada. Hito Steyerl define estas imagens digitais como “*imagens pobres*” ou, como defendido neste trabalho, imagens precárias, ao criar uma correspondência entre o atual regime político de trabalho com uma produção visual digital, numa perspectiva não profissional. Mas em momentos de protesto, estas “imagens pobres”, reconhecidas como desvalorizadas, comunicam e criar memória e história, emancipando a noção de vídeo “vernacular” como parte da acção política (Snowdon, 2014). Foram momentos como os movimentos sociais de 2011, como as “Arab Springs”, “Movimento 12M”, “Madrid 15M” e “Occupy Wall Street”, em que as “redes de indignação e esperança”(Castells, 2012) se formaram e surgiram globalmente, num espaço público híbrido de contestação, que estas imagens podem ser novamente convocadas. Conforme analisado, na paisagem visual do Youtube.com, onde “a cultura participativa continua a ser o seu principal negócio” (Burgess e Green, 2009), estas imagens fazem parte do fluxo dos protestos e a sua recuperação constitui um ato de “reaparecimento”. Este reaparecimento é pensado aqui em diferentes gestos, respectivamente, como constituição de um corpus de vídeos de protesto, alinhados pela metáfora das *imagens-pirilampas* (Didi-Huber-

man, 2009), em tempos digitais, transportadas para o continente visual do Youtube.com. Também como parte de uma investigação prática, foi desenvolvido um protótipo de um documentário interativo, como um filme plataforma, organizado em torno da representação de uma “articulação do protesto” (Steyerl, 2002) onde as contribuições se organizam, entre linhas temporais individuais e coletivas. Como num editor de vídeo, é proposta uma mesa de montagem como experiência participativa, utilizando os materiais dos protestos. Este estudo propõe experimentar práticas artísticas como num “*laboratório crítico*” (Hirschhorn, 2013) com um efeito de “*coletivos encontrados*” presente no arquivo (Baron, 2013) que se constitui em neste artefacto multimédia, interativo enquanto hipótese de persistência na memória coletiva, ou retrato coletivo de aparência política, a partir de momentos de protesto de movimentos sociais como os de 2011. Produzir uma intervenção activista e estética, uma intervenção *ativista*, como “forma de arte” política do século XXI (Weibel, 2014).

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: ativismo digital, documentário, movimentos sociais

[ABSTRACT]

Appearance is a political instance, as collective representation is a possibility to an emancipation of communities, of the “peoples” (Didi-Huberman, 2012), and a mechanism of constitution of cultural memory. The possibility of appearance that also participates in the history of collectives is a power relation in itself. In digital culture, global appearance seems to have exploded, but it has also been dissolved under a digital technological regime of “mass image”(Cubitt, 2016) visual production. Immateriality, programmed obsolescence, pervasive software and a dependence to produce and visualize under global corporations regimes, that organize systems and technologies, make this affirmation paradoxical and problematic to a collective constitution of these representations with a risk of commodifying memory. Despite this, there has been a connection between cultural techniques and memory, that under the “Californian Ideology” (Barbrook, 1999) digital culture is organized as a balance between “participatory culture” and “neoliberal entrepreneurship”. However, never such a quantity of images have been produced and shared. Hito Steyerl defines these as “poor images” or as stated here, defined as precarious images, making a correspondence between present political regimes of labour with visual and cultural production digitally produced, as non professional

video. But in moments of uprisings, these poor images, commonly recognized as devalued, served to communicate and create memory and History, emancipating “vernacular” videos as part of the political actors (Snowdon, 2014) Such were moments as 2011 social movements, like “Arab Springs”, “Moviment12M”, “Madrid15M” and “Occupy Wall Street”, when “networks of outrage and hope” (Manuel Castells, 2012) stepped out globally, in an hybrid public space of insurrection. As analyzed in visual landscapes of Youtube.com where “participatory culture is its core business” (Burgess and Green, 2009), these images were part of the uprisings flow, and their retrieval constitutes an act of “reappearance”. This reappearance is oriented here in different gestures, respectively as a constitution of a corpus of protest videos, aligned through the metaphor of fireflies-images (Didi-Huberman, 2009) in digital times, transported to Youtube.com visual continents. Also, as part of a practice based research, a prototype of an interactive documentary, as a platform film, has been developed, aligned with a representation of an “articulation of protest”(Hito Steyerl, 2002) where, as an editing table, between individual and collective timelines, a participatory interactive experience is proposed, using remnant materials of protests. This study essays how to relate artistic practices of “Critical Laboratory” (Hirschhorn, 2013) with “found collective” effect of archive documentary (Jaimie Baron, 2013) related in this digital, online, multimedia, interactive, audiovisual artifact, produced by individuals with digital images, in a way to persist in collective memory and become a collective portrait of political appearance from historical moments of social movements uprisings as those of 2011. At the same time, an activist and aesthetic intervention, an activist intervention takes place, as a political “XXIst Century art form” (Weibel, 2014).

KEYWORDS: digital activism, documentary, social movements

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Present day

March 2020

Catherine Malabou, in a recent text about present pandemic "Quarantine from Quarantine, "Rousseau, "Robinson Crusoe" and "I"¹, remembers an episode from Jean Jacques Rousseau life, that he described in his "Confessions"(1782).

Rousseau, in a journey from Paris to Venice, being on board of a boat, that had to halt in Genoa, due to a disease in Messina, was asked to quarantine for twenty-one days and had to opt between staying in the boat, where he was traveling, or going to a lazaretto in the city. The philosopher preferred the lazaretto - a hospital for those with contagious diseases, with inherent risks - but away from the boat and its confinement - "like another Robinson Crusoe, I began to arrange myself for my one-and-twenty days, just as I should have done for my whole life." Rousseau also vividly describes his arrangement of the lodge and his preparation for the quarantine: "I made myself a seat with one of my trunks laid flat, and a table with the other. I took out some writing paper and an inkstand, and distributed, in the manner of a library, a dozen books which I had with me". What to take from here?

Catherine Malabou enlightens a dark moment like this particular one, with her singular thoughts. The philosopher seeks in this confinement guidance to contemporary quarantine. And the Rousseau experience is a key, interpreted as "a quarantine of a quarantine":

"There is something else perhaps more profound in this passage, which is that quarantine is only tolerable if you quarantine from it—if you quarantine within the quarantine and from it at the same time, so to speak. The lazaretto represents this redoubled quarantine that expresses Rousseau's need to isolate from collective isolation, to create an island (insula) within isolation".

The necessity that the philosopher confesses here is justified with a need for a radical search of "*my self* in two words", and I tend to agree, almost a bodily experience of self-awa-

¹ Catherine Malabou, "To Quarantine from Quarantine, Rousseau, Robinson Crusoe and "I", in Transversal Texts, last accessed 29 March 2020 - https://transversal.at/blog/to-quarantine-from-quarantine#_ftn1. This text is part of an initiative of Transversal Texts (<https://transversal.at/transversal/>) as a reflection on the actual pandemic, entitled "Around the Crown".

reness and solitude, of being on *one's own*. The need to clear a space and essay confinement within the confinement explains not individualism, but rather a possibility to relate.- “When I reached such a confinement within confinement” exposes the author “a place in the place where nobody could enter and that at the same time was the condition for my exchanges with others”. Nevertheless, as Catherine Malabou presents - “solitude cannot be the origin of society” - according to Marx's arguments.

To this philosopher, with such a crystalline idea in times of opacity as the ones we are living, defends: “This may be true, but I think it is necessary to know how to find society within oneself in order to understand what politics means”. Catherine Malabou words and thoughts impacted me during these weeks of March 2020, when facing the end of a dissertation journey, under a global pandemics, living in confinement and dealing each day with a thesis about politics, collectives, common grounds, encounters and interactions.

“Personally, at the moment, I am on the contrary trying to be an “individual.” confesses the philosopher, among all those global analyses of the current crisis caused by the global pandemics. How does this statement transform and gives sense to these final steps in this paradoxical momentum? It reverses originally a construction of the social. This individual moment, is a “political” hypothesis too, in a sense of relational, “because I think on the contrary that an epochè, a suspension, a bracketing of sociality, is sometimes the only access to alterity”, solidarity within solitude. Somehow, finishing my dissertation journey during this *epochè* - a time of “suspension of judgement (...) to gain peace of mind to daily living” (in Encyclopaedia Britannica)² - makes evidence of what doctoral research also is. A *sheltered-in-place* experience, that “has to be a radical Robinson Crusoe” one, living it as “an experience that allows one to construct a home out of nothing. To start anew. Or to remember”. I recognize here a correspondence with a research journey.

To confine into such a journey, to gather energy through the years and the changes that passed, almost a decade after the events related, is also to endure in their existence. But also to experience time with patience. Thoughts and theory never grow old. When a cycle seems to finish, like that of social movements of 2011, and times become darker as in 2016, with some lugubrious changes in international politics, I thought that my research would become out of date, my object opaque and extemporaneous. But, “in darker times” is when sur-

² <https://www.britannica.com/topic/epoche>

vival matters most, and at the present day, from a necessity of confinement, as in a radical solitude, an alterity appears. In precarious times, as the ones lived nowadays, the concepts and research steps presented through these pages persist, make their way to survival and appearance.

1.2 Motto

At the moment I stepped the street in Lisbon, in the 12th March 2011, in Movimento 12 March demonstration, I wondered what would happen with that mass of people on the street if it would be possible to make a contemporary revolution. I also wondered what would happen to the thousands of images that were being produced at that moment by the thousands present in the street. Thousands of people multiplied by thousands of images was such a number to consider that I could not imagine it fit in one string of film. For me, at that moment, that profusion of images had a visual form, that of an explosion. What would happen to all these images, would they be encapsulated in hard drives in home computers or hard drives, what would happen to them?

Those images at the moment were so lively, those on the streets were so focused on shooting them, in a kind of "remembrance act of the body", individual and collective. These images fragile existence, once digital and virtual was precarious, like the ones of those protesters on the street. *Precem*, meaning on "a prayer"³, or living on the dependence, or goodwill of someone, a community, a system, a society. These images were an essence of political image, their existence defined by not being an image of truth, but true images. Their potential remained on this converging fact.

And those images led to an interrogation. Their existence should not be only fading in the invisibility of a computer hard drive. This interrogation led me to research both aesthetic and theoretical, at a time artistic but also, consequently, academic. Could exist for these images, within contemporaneity, a "forme juste"? What would be that form? What would be a form and technique⁴ that would address their actual configuration?

³. Precarious is one of the political nouns of the 21st century. Hal Foster in "Bad New Days"(Verso, 2015, p.103) reminds the etymological source from "The Oxford English Dictionary", "from the Latin *"precarius"*, obtained by entreaty, depending on the favour of others, hence uncertain, precarious, from *precem*, prayer"

⁴ entering Walter Benjamin's universe in "Author as Producer" (1934), New Left Review 1.62 (1970): 83-96.

Such form would have to reenact forms of collective protest, as collective uprisings. A form that would materialize possibilities of plural and individual at the same time, relating and communicating through a ghost value of memories. Those **protests images** of social movements, like those that happened during 2011 - "Arab Springs", "Movimento 12M", "Madrid 15M" and "OccupyWS" - that had chronological dynamics linking them. A form that would be a node between temporalities, recovering from recent past a rhythm of events, and an unknown digital future, of archival uncertainty, as a horizon of lost images in the Web landscape. A form that would shape visual modern *liquidity*⁵. A grid where a structure solid, but open, would enable an appearance, an encounter between those plural images and its virtual fluidity. A form that would operate from a node of cinema, montage. To cut is to give form, appearance, and consequently, political significance. To cut the visual *mass image*, a concept that Sean Cubitt presents as: "Each image taken negates the scene it captures and replaces it with an image"⁶.

Montage shapes cinema, where hypothetical and fragmental images become a *collective form*. Montage, synthesis in dialectics of moving image became a central frame to this research. To combine into a string of time, a video timeline, photographs and sounds, words and effects became a hypothesis to share intervention with artistic possibilities, at a moment where participatory culture has been converging into *passive uploading* as part of a technological workflow, part of an interface ideology, or attention economy. To film on the street and to share it on social media with a message, a meaning, a piece of music, a montage, a form, like have dreamt avant-garde interventionists.

A grid to *digital formless*⁷, would have to make visible a collective image of such uprising moments, in an open but at the same time concrete form. An **online editing table**, an *open and collective* tool, where images would circulate, fixing themselves at a moment in individual montage and personal timelines, and then participate in a wider film, an indefinite, persistent and expanding film made of individual timelines.

⁵ Zygmunt Bauman coined the term in "Liquid Modernity" (Polity, 2000) where he "examines how we have moved away from a 'heavy' and 'solid', hardware-focused modernity to a 'light' and 'liquid', software-based modernity".

⁶ Sean Cubitt's text, found in Academia.edu is a keynote presentation at Transimage Conference 2016. https://www.academia.edu/27038871/Untimely_Ripped_Against_the_Mass_Image_Sean_Cubitt . Last accessed in April 2020.

⁷ Here the comparative term comes from Rosalind Krauss's essay on forms and grids. "Formless: A User's Guide" (Zone Books, 1997)

Such form would be a surface, as a rink, at a time a centripetal force, agglutinating a multitude of media, videos, photographs and sounds of a multitude of subjects. And, in a second moment, a centrifugal force expelling images, discourses, individualities, portraits. Both individual and collective. Where one could watch a mosaic of plural images or a singular timeline, showing a particular film or perspective. All these happening through the artistic intervention of those who would feel a commitment to participate. The interaction of a multitude, at once singular and plural. With their politics and their materials. Art and Activism as in **Artivism**.

1.3 Dissertation Overview

This research aims to address the dissolution of collective memories in times of digital culture, questioning the possibilities of constituting collective portraits with individual protest images: as such, it analyses a corpus of videos released around 2011 social movements and its survival in Youtube.com. It also develops a **digital activist artefact**, an interactive online editing table as a platform film. To accomplish this double goal, the constitution of a corpus of pre-existent videos and the digital prototype of activist montage, I will first focus on an analysis of protest videos from Youtube.com visual platform and second, as result of experimental practice, that both combines theory and practice, develop a digital artefact.

Since this study is a composite of two different paths, the steps I take in this dissertation originate a multifaceted object, textual and visual. As such, the first chapter, “*Dissolutions and Appearances*” corresponds to a **State of the Art and Literature Review** and aims to approach a theoretical arch between these two poles. It presents a journey from different modes of dissolution and conceptions of collective memory constitution to draw several hypotheses to this investigation, from a corpus of remembrance to a prototype of appearances.

To follow this goal, conceptions on collective memory, digital images and objects are reviewed, from an initial problem of dissolution of appearances and questioning as a political problem. To address this question is chosen a path of materials, hence materiality of digital objects is central to the issues of this research question and its developments. To revise this perspective, a way through cultural techniques and digital interactions as interfaces and soft-

ware, are here presented as foundational structures of the attention economy and material dis-solutions.

The anchoring point to this argument and the theoretical journey is organized around the Foucault notion of *apparatus*, and Giorgio Agamben and Gilles Deleuze readings of it. The apparatus as a necessary countermovement to surpass its own blockage, from disappearance to appearances. The second part of the journey outlines contemporary notions of apparatus as *machine* from Gerald Raunig conceptions, in "A Thousand Machines"(2010), referencing Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari works, where a formulation of concatenation machine, as social and resistant elements, becomes a major organizing concept to the precedent practical development of an artefact prototype. Once a characterization of the context of "Movements of the Squares"⁸ or "networks of outrage and hope"(2012) in Manuel Castells terms, is devised, the subjects, both of these contemporary social movements, as also of this study, are questioned between conceptions of people, individual and multitudes, in their precarious conditions of existence, from theoretical approaches since Paolo Virno or Isabell Lorey and her study on the "government of precarious" (Lorey, 2012).

Their appearances are theorized here from a correspondence of emotional agency to participate in such movements to the produced digital images that crystalize untimeliness of uprisings, a circular time-space of the streets and its virtual projection on protest videos, as Furio Jesi singular essay "Spartakus, The Symbolology of Revolt", a study of Spartakus League revolt and events at late 1918 and 1919, that led to unfortunate Rosa Luxemburg's death. Interrogating the revolts of 21st-century, a formulation about *commonist art*, as digitally emancipated is outlined, as the 2014 Leonardo Electronic Almanac "RED ART, New Utopias in Data Capitalism" (MIT, 2014) questioned, hence emergent practices in "art and conflict" are gathered from artistic and academic landscapes, as captured in Weibel definition of activist - *the new type of artist of the twenty-first century* - the thematic line that organized the exhibition "Global Activism -Art and Conflict in the 21st Century" (ZKM, 2014).

Within this framework, the role of documentary cinema, and interactive documentary specifically, is addressed. For instance, documentary practices, dealing with archival footage and political cinema, questions relations between archival theorizations of montage and me-

⁸ a term coined by Paolo Gerbaudo in "Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism" (Pluto Press, 2012) configured a condition of these social movements, organized through the urban architecture of central squares.

mory effects, as Jaimie Baron (2013) concept of "archive effect" and the impact of digital interactive technologies on creative documentaries in the emergent field of I-docs, being constituted in different academic clusters, MIT DocLab, I-Docs, and works like Sandra Gaudenti, Mandy Rose or Judith Ashton enhance. Questioning a role for political cinema is consequently reflecting on protest images use and interrogations, as definitions of Patricia Pisters on contemporary "filmmakers as metallurgists"(2016) and Deleuze conceptions of "political image".

From this point and to pursue different hypothesis of appearances, two different paths are developed in this study. One from analysis and a collection of protest images of these movements from Youtube.com and other from interventionist art practices to cinema montage, as articulation for an interactive prototype. The first, analytical and interpretative, is established through a study of its terrain, Youtube.com, the major online video platform, where emergent practices of visual and participatory culture collide and where resides a corpus of remnant protest images from 2011 social movements. As such, a more-in-depth analysis of this *meta-content aggregator* corporation takes place, hence a framing of the conditions of the constitution of these images and its hypothetical reappearance are deeply connected with user practices and the platform evolution takes place, as some theoretical efforts evidence, like "Youtube: Online Video and Participatory Culture"(Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, 2009, 2018).

To shape this collection and define a gesture, a metaphor to retrieve such protest images from Youtube.com is essayed. The conception of *luciole* or *fireflies*, from Georges Didi-Huberman work "Survivance des Lucioles"(2009) enlightens a fragile figure, the **image-luciole** - an intermittent existence- that embodies a resistance both on underexposure or overexposure conditions. Fireflies, as images, or firefly-images open, with this author, a reflection on the possibility of its resistance as appearances, organizing traces and its political survival as assumed references to Aby Warburg and Walter Benjamin. This visual metaphor corresponds in digital times to a description of "poor images" in the modern classic by Hito Steyerl (2009) - "a ghost of an image, a preview, a thumbnail, an errant idea, an itinerant image".

From this perspective, a genealogical movement of analysis of these video singularities becomes a process both of recollecting, interpreting and constituting a visual collective, with the consequent understanding of its material possibilities, as the impact of *habitual new*

media(2016) theories by Wendy Chun clarify. Also, conceptions of *vernacular values* by Ivan Illich, updated to 21st-century digital insurrections and its imagery by Peter Snowdon, both on his doctoral thesis and film "The Uprising" (2013)⁹, that are taken in this study as building blocks of central arguments in this outcomes chapter. The practical gesture that closes this theoretical journey, there developed, is proposed at the end of this chapter through another Hito Steyerl text, "The Articulation of Protest" (2002) as a possibility of *a montage of elements* to which social movements and political protests, and consequently their images, also respond. Thus, to a prototype of appearances or collective portrait, a montage of these visual communities happens, to envision a form that started this research journey and questioning.

The next chapter, "**Transversal Practices**" is a **Methods and Methodology** section. The first part of it focuses on a necessary balance between theory and practice in a Practice-based research type of PhD, making use of recognized assessments by Creative Cognition Studios academic research group, seeded in Technology University in Sydney, and their articles, as the essays by Linda Candy and Ernest Edmonds close reading attest, specifically on Design and New Media fields of production.

Hence this study focuses both aesthetic and theoretical questionings, a close reading of "Aesthetics of Resistance"(2010) by Hito Steyerl, proposes a methodological arrangement of aesthetic and resistant practices since avant-garde art groups, that frames a current debate around academic disciplinary incorporation of artistic practices, at the same time, a theoretical, or even a scientific perspective, organizes the work of such art tendencies. What is central to this study from this reading is also a historical methodology in artistic research bringing together, from conflict and insurrections, strategies of resistance and emancipation, as those under experimentation in this research.

Anchoring this study in the field of Digital Media and dealing with contemporary *techniques* to artistically and theoretically address the research questions, contributed in methodological terms to questioning on methodological affordances of Digital Media status quo. Thus, McKenzie Wark definitions on "Hacker Manifest"(2005) or plural class of "General Intellects to 21st Century"(2018) outlines a specificity around Digital Media, in a comparison with apparatus theory, to emancipate digital images as digital political forms, hence

⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/01/movies/the-uprising.html> a recent review of the film in NYTimes stresses the circularity of uprisings energy and agency in times like present days, recalled as "*the time of iPhone cinema has arrived*". This article confirms a new wave of interests on these "recollective" gestures. Last accessed April 2020.

hackers "create the possibility of new things entering the world". As a methodological positioning, *hacker* figure, within digital culture appears as a figure of specific technological contours. Also, the complexity of academic research in the contemporary landscape is outlined here, within a horizon of a meta debate of a creative and critical role Digital Media can play.

The next sections in this chapter will enroll methodologies used to both the following outcomes, the corpus of protest videos and the prototype. Thus, to address the first, a clarification of genealogy as a method is essayed, reminding Michel Foucault reading of the philosopher concept in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"(1984) and its political implication within a metaphor of poor image digital "fireflies" context, a procedure to invest on a frame flow of analysis of protest videos of social movements. These are gathered and aligned in a Youtube.-com channel - precarious images | [imagens precárias](#), developed to the purpose of this dissertation. The Youtube.com search of protest videos to be included in the analysis responds to certain conditions of emergence and retrieval: videos uploaded by individual channels, dated the closest to the events they document, the footage as raw as possible, non-edited, and with low visualizations number, making plausible to depict them as ghost images, as *images-lucioles*. The filmic analysis corresponds to Manuela Penafria proposal in "Análise de Filmes - Conceitos e Metodologias" (2009). Another layer will be taken into consideration, due to an analysis in a multimedia context as Youtube.com interaction interface enables.

The next methodological issues congregate a constellation of references that constitute a horizon of objects and experiences that are historical nodes to replicate in the development of the second outcome of this study, the artefact. Thus, under the need of developing a video activist editor, documentary historic works of Chris Marker, Harun Farocki and Andrei Ujica, with films as "Le Fond de L'Air est Rouge"(1978), "Videograms of a Revolution"(1992) or a singular film like "As Armas e o Povo"(1975) are milestones and guided progression steps of this experimental process of constituting a collective portrait, when coming to general montage, collective and political elaborations. Also on the perspective of self-portrait, an important aspect of the architecture of the editor, Jean Luc Godard, or Natalie Bookchin will be taken into account. Developing after some aspects of the platform, cinematographic references also include specific editing features, emerging from ethnographic filmic contexts, like Jean Rouch "Moi, un Noir" (1959) or the singular work body on chromatic palettes of Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi.

To address specific design questions of the platform and its user interface and interaction, are decisive interventionist practices of contemporary public art, inheritors of the avant-garde of 21st-century, making implicit deviations of "trespassing areas", a choice of transversal methods, as attempts to a creative encounter of practices. The dislocation of examples becomes structural to a prototype that projects itself in various spaces and languages. To go further on this experiment, the contemporary modes of production of Thomas Hirschhorn's artwork are a comparative itinerary when questioning the interface as a settlement space or the materials choice and interaction as political participation, that appear as hypotheses to explore. Despite these uses of interchangeable artistic practices as models, the artefact also explores a methodology from design theorization as the metaphorical construction of "Computer as Theatre"(1993) by Brenda Laurel, and thus its theatrical iterations and potentials, thus political meanings can be layered from the example given, following the author of Bertolt Brecht's "epic theatre".

The fourth chapter, "*A Genealogy of Ghosts - Youtube Digital Fireflies*" is the **first Outcome Chapter**, embodying a detailed analysis of collected protest videos, under the methodology explained earlier. An initial analysis of the visual decade of Youtube.com is made, hence it takes different theoretical attempts to provide knowledge about the platform. Despite their multimedia and intersectional efforts, as "YoutubeReader.com"¹⁰ example, the legacy of the projections about the platform that this study reflects, become an interesting source from these works. Also, technical shifts in the overwhelming platform today, and its transformation of "participatory culture" terms, lead this research into a detailed analysis of some creative functions of Youtube.com, as Creator Studio, an video editing feature, that has disappeared from the users' facilities menu. The youtube.com channel - Imagens Precárias | Precarious Images¹¹ - divided in specific playlists by 2011 social movements, respectively "#arabsprings", "#movimento12M", "#democracia real ya" and "#occupyWS" gathers from 25 to 85 videos each. These are videos that resonate its experiences today and, isolated as singulars or as a whole, have correspondent meanings and evolve as dynamic images of each movement dialectics. Arab Springs as *initial images* emancipate notions of an *insistance des lutttes* as Dork Zabunyan text title (2016), with a known impact in the academic and artistic

¹⁰ <http://www.youtubereader.com/>. Last accessed in April 2020.

¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoZoSEad-o5Ups5sUz-FFvw/playlists>

field, as Alisa Lebow's "<https://www.filmingrevolution.org/>" or Lara Baladi's <http://tahrirarchives.com/>, or the inaugural "<http://beta.18daysinegypt.com/>" are proof.

The Portuguese movement, that happened some few months after Arab events, is here presented in a particular relation of memory reenactment within Portuguese historical context of protest song and Portuguese dictatorship resistance. The Portuguese set of videos entail a dialogue circumscribed to a unique demonstration and its festive performance. Spanish "Democracia real ya" videos, otherwise, present themselves more detached from a unique interpretation, where a connection with the spoken word of "acampadas" and assemblies, possibly distend the flow of the videos. It expresses an extended use of precarious materials, which this study recollection underlines.

At last, *occupy as form* in Judith Butler terms¹², may express synthetic formulations either of the last movement of the 2011 year, *Occupy Wall Street* as of the assemblage of the videos. The major political claims can express a completeness embraced in its slogans. The composite of such visual communities transport to online visual platforms some of the potential energy of the streets, "towards a performative theory of assembly" (Butler, 2015) under Arendtian political theory influence and the role of common video devices, as mobile phones, as analysed, in the context of politicizing vernacular videos.

The fifth chapter, "**Platform Film as Montage Communities**", concerns the **Practical Outcome** of this dissertation. The journey bifurcation presents, in this chapter a dialogue between effective practice and the development of an artefact process, in one hand, and on the other, the theoretical and referential landscapes from where it derived. Openly, an exercise of heterotopian possibilities to the creation of an alternative locus, where a collective portrait can appear, against the dissolution of the "image of the peoples" and collective digital memory.

The finished platform can be explored in "[filhosdamadrugada](http://filhosdamadrugada.com/)" site, generously hosted by INCD¹³, entitled with the name of a Portuguese song, "Canto Moço"(1970) in a tribute to José Afonso, a Portuguese singer and songwriter. The outcomes presented in this chapter are also the resultant effort of a collaboration with Daniel Cruz, that developed during his Master

¹² Judith Butler, is one of the intellectual figures of the movement, gave a lecture in the Arts Research Center in the University of California, <https://arts.berkeley.edu/occupy-as-form-judith-butler/>. See also the publication TIDAL, under the subtitle, "Occupy Theory, Occupy Strategy", re-edited by e-flux, where the author also participates. http://www.e-flux.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/TIDAL_occupytheory.pdf?b8c429

¹³ <https://www.lip.pt/index.php?section=infrastructures&page=infrastructures-computing&projectid=12>

Program in Computing Engineer¹⁴ the core programming of this platform. During an extended period, a collaborative dialogue, with different iterative phases when testings were conducted, that resulted in the current form of the artefact, as a final presentation demonstrates.

"Critical Laboratory" (Thomas Hirschhorn, 2013) at once utopian and realistic, as in Thomas Hirschhorn artistic and theoretical practices, defines the contours to such an experiment. Assuming an impact of defining a space of intervention, as the examples of the artist series "Philosophers Monuments", particularly, "Gramsci Monument" settled in Bronx, New York, in 2012, this process transports to the virtual space of an online video platform interrogations on emancipatory political configurations, publics constitution and interventionist participation or the use of precarious materials as the studied protest videos and its impact on the modes of production and reception of the artwork. Also, the role of the artist as a mediator or a *designer* is under consideration, thus Thomas Hirschhorn assemblage work is deeply a designed experience of the artwork, very close to the user experience of the artefact, that encounters the main aims of this dissertation.

Hence, an axis on spatial considerations is established, the interaction proposed thrives through Brenda Laurel's interface design proposals, and its methodological metaphor of a computer screen and architecture, as a theatrical stage. Such approach opened a reflection to the use of the concept of *Alienation Effect*, as in Bertolt Brecht's writings and "epic theatre" theories, an attempt to question the purposes of immediacy in interactive documentary and an alternative distance effect.

The artefact maintains an *open grid* that embodies a platform definition, such a performative and efficient one in digital culture, inheritor of computing engineer architectures and adopted in cultural landscapes, even in political terms, as Paolo Gerbaudo essay on the *platform Party* (2019)¹⁵ testifies. Therefore considerations on the interface visuality, referring to Michel Foucault "Other Spaces"(1984) constitution of alternatives spaces, combines a reflection on the ideology of the interface, as in Alexander Galloway "Interface Effect" (2012) and a particular artisanal ancient Japanese practice of clothing, *boroboro*, meaning montage and sedimentation of poor tissue fragments, that combines a patchwork, both spatial and tem-

¹⁴ "Plataforma Colaborativa para Documentário Interactivo", in <https://www.fct.unl.pt/provas-academicas/2017/07/provas-de-mestrado-integrado-em-engenharia-informatica-daniel-dos-santos-da-cruz>

¹⁵ Gerbaudo, Paolo. "The platform party: The transformation of political organisation in the era of big data." (2019): 187-198.

poral, hence such fabric landscapes were made to last. The interface layouts converge to a digital representation of these visualities, also aligned with Lev Manovich concepts of *spatial montage*.

One of the structural axes proposed, as a movement of representation of digital subjects, creates a tension between two poles, collective portrait and self-portrait, as conceptions of the subject emerge as multitudes or individuals in contemporary digital societies. "JLG/JLG - autoportrait de décembre"(1994) by Jean Luc Godard designed a frontline to one of the main interaction paths of the platform: the creation of an interactive self-portrait, like an interview, on precarious contemporary life conditions. A digital ethnographical gesture takes place, constituting a constellation of faces, that appear from a performative gesture as the interview proposed to the participants in the platform.

The next step develops a conception of political protest as an articulation, close to Hito Steyerl "The Articulation of Protest"(2002) and evolves to a presentation of theoretical and cinematographic references used in the craft of the editing table, the tailored video editor, that shapes participation in the artefact. As Hito Steyerl writes "Every articulation is a montage of various elements - voices, images, colours, passions or dogmas - within a certain period and with a certain expanse in space."(2002). The embodiment of such weft of videos and self-portraits results in the appearance of a collective patchwork, the outcome of this activist montage platform.

To define and design specificities to this editing platform, against a group of available other free non-professional video editing software, there were pinpointed specific cases in documentary history, as examples referred of "Le Fond de L'Air est Rouge" (Chris Marker, 1978) considering relations of memory as montage, "Videograms of a Revolution" (Harun Farocki and Andrei Ujica, 1992) a film conducted as an essay on the editing table, catalyst of video fragments as historical events. "As Armas e o Povo"(Colectivo dos Trabalhadores da Actividade Cinematográfica, 1975), a Portuguese cinematic experience from post-revolutionary events, also depicted as an exercise on the role of the filmmaker, focusing the contribution of Glauber Rocha in the film.

Also "Moi, un Noir"(1959) by Jean Rouch and derivations on discourse and voice-over state a political and aesthetic engagement against the video musical template ideology available in Youtube, for instance. Also, contributions to the development of editing features

as drawing, textual insertions and quotation significance systems are here influenced by Jean Luc Godard analysis made by Georges Didi-Huberman in the fifth volume of "L'Oeil de L'Histoire - Passés Cités par JLG"(2015) or chromatic disruptive tools, in a tribute to the artisan work of two unique filmmakers, Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi, and their cinema machine, their *camera analytique*.

Along with this study, and through its main outcomes, leading to a corpus of conclusions, I hope to contribute to an appearance of collective portraits, from protest images, that in their untimeliness reappearance and survival, are, not images of truth, but true images. Another contribution concerns a utopian possibility of alternative space to constitute a digital artefact, a platform film made of patchwork visualities, that intends to possibly address Walter Benjamin formulations, when answering in "Author as Producer" (1934, New Left Review", 1970) to his rhetorical question, "Yet you want to advance the study of fascism with such a proof?". Hence, in Benjamin words: "I want to show you that the political tendency of a work can only be politically correct if it is also literarily correct" meaning that "the correct political tendency of a work" also includes "its literary quality" because it includes "its literary tendency".

As the key to this argument continues in the text, his *dialectical consideration* comes from the *living social context* and through these, frames: "Thus I would now like to suggest a question which lies closer at hand. A question which is somewhat more modest, which is less encompassing, but which seems to me to have a better chance of being answered" - where a new formulation appears - "Before I ask: how does a literary work stand concerning the relationships of production of a period, I would like to ask: how does it stand in them?" As seen "This question aims directly at the function that the work has within the literary relationships of production of a period. In other words, it aims directly at a work's literary technique."

This questioning concerns technical conditions, not only in its style or aesthetics but in its deeper modes of production. As an attempt of a modest answer to the explosion of digital images from those "networks of Outrage and Hope"(Manuel Castells, 2013) and according to the spirit of Walter Benjamin words, this dissertation journey initiates and thrives as a Digital Media doctoral dissertation and a digital prototype.

2. STATE OF THE ART & LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Dissolution of Collective Digital Appearances

"Il est probable que les historiens du futur aient à s'étonner d'un état de fait qui réunit sur-exposition et sous-exposition dans la même image des peuples contemporains"

(Georges-Didi Huberman, "Peuples exposés, peuples figurants." *L'œil de l'histoire 4*", p.15)

In "L'Oeil de L'Histoire", "Peuples exposés, Peuples Figurants" (Les Éditions du Minuit, 2012) Georges Didi-Huberman addresses questions to the History of the future. People, *les peuples* are exposed, their images are exposed in contemporary times, more than ever, without meaning a more in-depth "representation". Contemporary digital images are part of a network of visual copies, but do they constitute a network of images of awareness and remembrance? Representation today is addressed not only as a problem of invisibility but of excessive imagery. The paradox is that between these two poles, the risk of disappearance of the collective image remains, meaning - "Les peuples sont toujours exposés a disparaître". The two poles, *underexposure* and *overexposure*, reflect a tension between these two stages of appearance: "sous-exposés dans l'ombre de leurs mise sous censure ou, c'est selon, mais pour un résultat équivalent, sur-exposés dans la lumière de leur mise en spectacle." (op. cit, p. 11).

Close to Guy Debord conceptions, a stage of spectacular society in "La Société du Spectacle" (1969) has perhaps evolved into its *digital form*:

"In societies dominated by modern conditions of production, life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation". (first thesis). "Fragmented views of reality regroup themselves into a new unity as a separate pseudo world that can only be looked at. The specialization of images of the world evolves into a world of autonomized images (...)." (second thesis)".

Debord thesis echoes in a contemporary upgrade to the digital. Despite this "separated mode" of spectacular life, people from around the world continue not to have an image, a collective image to share, an image of themselves to themselves and to relate to others. Nevertheless, on the other side of this paradox, today there is an overexposure: so much light

that reduces images to a shapeless digital configuration, a non-recognizable subject. “Trop de lumière aveugle”, once stereotyped image production of digital media devices, through which we capture and share them, is part of a workflow of distraction and obsolescence, creating a delusional quantity of formless visual information.

Although immense, such flow becomes a unique image, the *mass image*. Sean Cubitt describes it like this:

"The mass image – the huge composite picture of the world which is being assembled in databases at Microsoft, Instagram and Google – goes far beyond the single image even though it retains some of its defining qualities. The mass image employs humans to produce a universe of image-commodities that we and others exchange, reproduce and consume". "Untimely Ripped (Against the Mass image)" (Keynote at the Transimage Conference | 1st – 3rd July 2016 | Plymouth)¹⁶.

This image is more than a late simulacra configuration. It becomes a condensed entity, uniform. As Cubitt claims: "Each image taken negates the scene it captures and replaces it with an image" meaning that "As the absolute number of images increases, negation produces the mass image which replaces the entirety of the world, not just the unique scene, with a mass of pictures".

Why does this matter? If the possibility of an image is a promise of appearance, images readability happens in a critical space of reciprocity. How can such an interval be constituted? One key argument belongs to philosopher Hannah Arendt, one of the elected authors in Didi-Huberman constellations. A connection exists between appearance and politics, and belongs to "Arendt's participatory conception of citizenship" that addresses "both the question of the constitution of *collective identity*" but also "the conditions for the exercise of effective *political agency*". (d'Entreves, Maurizio Passerin, "Hannah Arendt", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2019 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.).¹⁷

Questions like these appear in her works "Qu'est-ce que la politique?"(1959) or "La Vie de l'Esprit" (1977) where the philosopher develops a "thinking of appearances". Didi-Huberman relays upon such conception of appearance as political, once are the same thing,

¹⁶ Accessed in https://www.academia.edu/27038871/Untimely_Ripped_Against_the_Mass_Image_Seal_Cubitt

¹⁷ <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/arendt/>

and the political is plurality (p. 24, op.cit). To think plurals, in Didi-Huberman's terms comes as to think political space like an interval network.

"La politique prend naissance dans l'espace-qui-est-entre les hommes, donc quelque chose de fondamentalement extérieur-à-l'homme. (...) La politique prend naissance dans l'espace intermédiaire et elle se constitue comme relation."(Arendt, Hannah, "Qu'est que c'est la politique? (1950-1959), Paris, Le Seuil, 1995, p.42-43). Hannah Arendt defines relation as constituent space of politics. How does relation appears? A parallel is between *the right to a voice* and *the right to see, or to be seen*. Installing a discussion around plurals, collective as more than a sum of parts, a sum of voices, or as the focus of this study, a sum of images as a political problem.

2.2 Dissolution of digital cultural memory

In the introduction to "Memory and Methodology" (Bloomsbury, 2000) Susannah Radstone, after convoking references and debates around memory studies, temporal categories, the crisis of the nineteenth century and its oppositional value to the objectification of History. The author addresses the question of "late modernity" memory boom writing:

"The contemporary memory boom represents, rather, late modernity's equivocations and ambivalences concerning truth, embodiment, location and the temporality of hope, equivocations which had their source in the disruptions and discontinuities of post-revolutionary, urban society, whose force deepened under the impact of the holocaust and which are now being worked through in the context of late modern technologies and temporalities." (Radstone, 2000, p.8).

The constitution of the "lieux de mémoire" de Pierre Nora¹⁸, consists, in Radstone conception, in its after crisis possibilities, more as an *equivocal mode*, what Andreas Huyssen describes as resistant mode in a Benjaminian conception - *some utopian space and time* beyond what Benjamin defined as "the homogeneous empty time of the capitalist present". (Huyssen 1995:6 in Radstone). To Radstone relates to "in the contemporary memory boom, the scales of equivocation swing again, and now appear to be weighted a little more towards a "memory" aligned with subjectivity, invention, the present, representation, and fabrication.

¹⁸ Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux De Mémoire." *Representations*, no. 26, 1989, pp. 7–24. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2928520. Accessed 25 Mar. 2020.

However, our preoccupations with memory remain equivocal (...) the fragile value of memory resides in its continued capacity to hold, rather than collapse these equivocations. It is this holding of equivocation I want to insist, which guarantees the radical value of memory in our times" (Radstone, 2000, op. cit. p.9).

What can this questioning enlighten upon configurations of memory technologically mediated, to the scale of nowadays?

The distance of indexicality has been reduced to almost immediacy, from event to re-presentation. As Hayden White writes in "The Modernist Event" ("Persistence of History: Cinema, Television and the Modern Event", edited by Vivian Sobchack, 1996) is in course a crisis of the historical event, that has *been dissolved* under modernist Art and Literature, with its consequences on cultural constructions and its relations with History. After this, *the modernist event* composes meanings upon different amplitudes of factuality and imagination. Also the notion of the *story* "has suffered (...) at least potential dissolution as a result of both that revolution in practices known as "cultural modernism" and the technologies of representation made possible by the electronics revolution". Hayden White develops: "the power of modern media to represent events in such a way as to render them" not only in a historiographical plane "but also resistant to any attempt to represent them in a story form"(op. cit., p.23). The dissolution of the event or the story also represents dissolutions of temporality and reduces its inscription in a contemporaneity context. However, present configurations modulate possibilities of past formations, and they also shape future meanings.

Jussi Parikka presents media Archeology as a *travelling discipline* as an attempt to respond to "studies of new media (that) often share a disregard for the past" ("Media Archeology", 2011). Although fluctuations of such discipline, with contributions of media theorists and a vast reference of works as *media archaeology*, this is, as in the realm of the arts, also about an "Archival Impulse" (Hal Foster, 2004), situating the question of the presentness of new media and its impacts on "cultural memory" constitution. Present, under the influence of New Media, is not only constant remediation (Bolter, Grusin, 2000), but a flattened convergence, what can lead to another reinterpretation of the idea of *equivoque*, or an equivocal constitution of cultural memory.

New Media, through present techno-capitalist regime, and its configurations in global media corporations result of a paradoxical composite, "The Californian Ideology", (Barbrook,

Richard and Cameron, Andy in "Science as Culture", January 1996)¹⁹. A constitutional tension between neoliberalism and Californian counter-culture existed, libertarian movements associating utopian communities into computational possibilities - "these technophiliacs thought the convergence of media, computing and telecommunications would inevitably create the electronic agora. (...) Who would thought that such a contradictory mix of technological determinism and libertarian individualism would become the hybrid orthodoxy of the information age?".(Barbrook and Cameron, 1996)

Such arguments can be used when thinking of global digital corporations, like Google, which is an overwhelming presence in our *electronic agora* as well as our quotidian gestures. Google is a global example of convergence in digital culture, and consequently, of collective memory uses and constitution.

Google started as a search engine, which strategic plan was to focus on academic research models, boosted by the development of famous "PageRank" algorithm, and is now an omnipresent networked interface of modes of production and modes of use of contemporary life, from Gmail to Youtube.com, to google drive, documents, photos, google scholar, maps or translator. Somehow, it has been built upon the *equivoque* that "for millions of users it ends up being the same as the Internet. But it is the Internet, not Google, that produces effects" (Cassin, Barbara, "Google Me, one-click democracy), 2009, 2018, p.15)

Despite its potential, "(...) it is a somewhat Deleuzian world, a support-surface aesthetics against the backdrop of a brain-machine: with its network, its rhizome—centre everywhere and circumference nowhere—its multiplicities, subsidiaries, the direct power of the multitude, simplicity of connection, self-organization (...). A world made by everyone, immanently, and not by one (...)"(Cassin, op.cit., p.15).

Although several plural possibilities, a corporation is structured upon a core business strategy and within its "terms of use and conditions". The literal condensing of whatever materials memories are made of, in its diverse possibilities, like stone, wood, or photographic paper and film, into digital data and storage, from Google or others, can configure a movement against cultural memory autonomy - "(...) Culture cannot be reduced, any more than knowledge can, to the total of information—no more indeed than a sum of pieces of information can make up information as such." (op.cit.,p.120) So, to draft upon the equivocal mode

¹⁹"The Californian Ideology", (Barbrook, Richard and Cameron, Andy in "Science as Culture", January 1996 DOI: 10.1080/09505439609526455

of cultural memory under digital media technology sphere is also to balance through an equivoque of freedom and control, being aware of the "fragile value of memory", and essaying alternative collective constitutions.

2.3 Dissolution of digital materials

To take here in account the constitution of memory, the focus of this study is to question the path of materials. Not only from a perspective of subjects and communities but of their produced objects, in this case, digital images, such as those produced by individuals with their everyday technologies, like mobile phones or other non-professional digital video devices. This pleiad of digital imagery includes small videos and photographs, produced within computing engineering protocols, using agreements and technological standards for digital objects like formats (.jpegs, .png, .avi, .mp4) and software applications with its different versions and compatibilities for access, reading and storage.

To trace its appearances and politics is also to trace its disappearances in digital times. To research after its traces as symptoms, under Didi-Huberman influence, that means also connecting with Aby Warburg and Walter Benjamin concepts of symptoms and image memories, in order to reenact possible theories of digital survivals and reappearances and to contribute to collective portraying, created under a vernacular landscape of digital communities and images.

"The photograph was very old. The corners were blunted from having been pasted into an album, the sepia print had faded, and the picture just managed to show two children standing together at the end of a little wooden bridge in a glassed-in conservatory, what was called a Winter Garden in those days". (Roland Barthes, "Camera Lucida", 1982)

Roland Barthes, in his writings on photography and its irreparable loss in his seminal "La Chambre Claire"(Barthes, 1980) confronts death. Death within photography matters also by the loss of materiality of the object. No longer we have monoliths to moan our deads, or thin photographic paper that gets old with us, a surface of memory, looking at us. A majority

of our life images and videos will be imprisoned in physical hard drives creating images or appearance without physicality.

Nevertheless, what is an image after all? What is the materiality of a contemporary image? To a debate on the concept of an image, as a troubling concept and its problematization within the appearance of new media and new mediations, W.J.T. Mitchell in the edition "Critical Terms to Media Studies"(2009) revises this concept under contemporary perspective - "a sign or a symbol of something that by virtue of its sensuous resemblance to what it represents". An image or icon possesses sensual qualities, like those identified by philosopher C. S. Peirce. Although problematic, the notion of resemblance in a definition of an image. W.J.T. Mitchell argues that - "we experience the image as a double moment of appearing and recognition, the simultaneous noticing of a material object and an apparition (...). An image is always both there and not there, appearing in or on or as a material object yet also ghostly, spectral, and evanescent." (op.cit., p.39).

However, from the point of view of Media Theory - "it is perhaps inevitable that images become the central element of media functions", or in other words, "images always appear in some medium or other, and we cannot understand media without constructing images of them". Thus, to face claimed crisis of each media period and its decline at the particular moment of digital images, W.J.T. Mitchell clarifies the position of some scholars that support a visual crisis of digital era due to an alteration into image ontology by a cut of its indexical "linkage to "the real".

Instead, as a shift in image ontology, W.J.T. Mitchell proposes that "If digitization has produced a change in the ontology of images" the crucial shift it is more close to the "changed conditions of their "being in the world"—the changed conditions of their production and circulation, the exponential increase in the number of images, and the rapidity of their transmission, especially via the Internet"(op. cit. p.44). A singular claim of the author is about digitization forms in the digital image. More than a surface is a process of digital information that appears as embodied experience. Internet as a *meta medium* incorporates others, is a continuous flow of images, that arises and circulates -"evolving so rapidly that no conceivable archive could ever contain them all"(op.cit.p.45).

Also, Art historian Hans Belting definition of an image in his work "Anthropology of Image"(Belting, 2011), relies upon a *triangulated definition*, between object, media and men-

tal representation - *picture, medium, body*. Since “there have never existed physical images (images object) without the participation of mental images since an image by definition is one that is seen (in fact only, when it is seen)”. Mental images “rely on objective images” once, they are “*rémanence* of the latter”. Also medium is present “the interaction between our bodies and external images includes a third parameter, one which I call a “medium,” in the sense of a vector, agent, dispositif (...) The medium functions as a support, host, and tool for the image”. To follow the path of materials is, in this case, also to attain to a “continuous process of interactions”, bringing to contemporaneity “that process [that] has left its traces in the history of artefacts”. (from the introduction, "An Anthropology of Images: Body, Picture, Medium", Hans Belting, 2001). To investigate collective images and consequences of digital images "presence in the world", is to investigate their material conditions of existence, in order to recuperate this image triangulation, in its contemporary digital iterations.

Getting back to W.T.J. Mitchel claims, it is doubtful that any technology would render images, "or sensuous firstness, resemblances, or analogue codes, obsolete. The persistence of these qualities" is a guarantee, although its metrics, that "they will maintain the uncanny, ambiguous character (...) We will never be done with asking what images mean, what effect they have on us, and what they want from us".(op. cit. p.47)

2.4 Cultural Techniques and Digital Objects

This inquiry upon a spectrum of cultural techniques and devices, well known through Friedrich Kittler in "Typewriter, Film, Gramophone" (1999) and "Optical Media"(2002). also the works of Jussi Parikka or Geoffrey Winthrop-Young. Also works like "Techniques of the Observer" (Jonathan Crary, 1990), where the place of the observer as a construction in modern visual apparatus is developed. These are predecessors of contemporary analysis. Hence modern cultural techniques of mediation of visual objects lead to digital objects. At the centre of these debates is an object of remembrance, of politics that is digitally mediated. An object which is produced and circulates under digital regimes of production and dissemination. Also under structures of hardware storage, software legibility and digital economy distribution of value. Contemporary images are mainly digital objects.

"On the Existence of Digital Objects" (2016) by Yuk Hui explores these questions: "What is a digital object?" - He explains - "By digital objects, I mean objects that take shape on a screen or hide in the back end of a computer program, composed of data and metadata regulated by structures or schemas" (Hui, 2016:1).

This author conceptions bring an account on ontological shifts of such objects, as the materiality of contemporary visual objects. Desktop or personal computers, screened mobile devices and battery chargers are immediate material objects we are surrounded to hold on to visual memories. In a strict point of view, plastic cables, metal strings, drives and chips are the remaining objects. Digital culture is not entirely ethereal without physicalities. It implies efforts, human and ecological resources that, as part of a structure of a global economy, are made of unequal power relations and micro politics.

In a singular film by documentarist Rithy Panh in Cambodia, "La Terre des âmes errantes" (2000) a group of route labourers digs a dangerous land, with mines and ghosts of the past wars, to open the way for fibre cables in order to install the first digital "highway" of the country, a connection with Europe, coming from Vietnam, crossing Cambodia and ending in Chinese frontier. James Bridle in a recent book "New Dark Age - Technology and the End of Future" (2018) takes into account these earthly sutures, and how cathodic cables, data storage and its remnants follow colonial maps and trajectories.

2.5 Opaque Interfaces, Soluble Software

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun builds bridges between these realms, digital storage, execution components and visual experiences through a notion of software, or, as also in Alexander Galloway's subject, interfaces and incompatibility. For Galloway, an interface is no longer an object but an "autonomous zone of activity" or processes that affect a "result of whatever kind" (from preface; "The Interface Effect", 2012). For Chun, in her article "Software, or the Persistence of Visual Knowledge"(Chun, 2005) software is "a notoriously difficult concept", once is "defined as a set of instructions that direct a computer to do a specific task" and as Chun asserts "as a set of instructions, its material status is unstable".

Nevertheless, understanding, as ultimate pleasure has to become visible: "To enjoy this absolute power, the programmer must follow the rules of a programming language. Re-

gardless, seeing his or her code produce visible and largely predictable results creates pleasure".

Thus, visibility is a direct link between a set of instructions and the result of a set of operations, a pleasurable connection, in the manipulation of interactive action with computers, to achieve visible results, getting programmer closer to the user. "In a formal sense computers understood as comprising software and hardware are ideology machines." (Chun, 2005, p.43). Once "software as ideology", a concept retrieved by Alexander Galloway ("The Interface Effect" (2012), where, close to Chun, the author agrees with this notion that the most opaque object, the computer, becomes a primary source of visual knowledge. As affirmed in Chun's essay - "the computer - that most non-visual and non-transparent device - has paradoxically fostered "visual culture" and "transparency" (Chun, 2005, p.43).

This theorization around mediation constructs of the *interface* - or the interaction with computers between its visible end image and its operations - as interfaces and screens - leads a path to understand such connections between cultural techniques and its complex and sophisticated digital forms and images. A relevant rationale to this research, once a partial outcome of this study is a digital artefact, built upon a digital structure with an interface interaction and a visual output.

Conceptual approaches in fields as Software Studies or Critical Software, gather authors as Lev Manovich. After "The Language of New Media" (2000) this author has been investigating politics and economics of cultural software, digital cultural techniques, with different depths, but also, as quantifiable analysis, big data perspectives and visualization results - as the shift from "Software Studies Lab" to "Cultural Analytics Lab" indicates. Part of a claim on critical perspectives into computer-mediated knowledge production, as Manovich recent articles show²⁰. Matthew Fuller, author of media ecologies theories as "Media Ecologies: Materialistic Energies in Art and TechnoCulture" (Leonardo Books, 2005), has contributed to such discussion in critical software studies, in "Software Studies, a Lexicon"(MIT, 2008).

²⁰ Some recent examples of Lev Manovich articles include: https://www.academia.edu/15328596/The_Science_of_Culture_Social_Computing_Digital_Humanities_and_Cultural_Analytics or https://www.academia.edu/9812905/Media_After_Software.

2.6 Dissolution of Attention

Along with a discussion on digital cultural techniques, this study enlists some ideas about impacts and effects of *dissolution of attention* of but also of the consequent appearance of *digital subjects* as recent "Digital Objects, Digital Subjects"²¹(David Chandler and Christian Fuchs, eds., 2019) edition concerns. This collection of texts reflects on consequent connections of dissolution of cultural memory and its forms of such production. Visual forms disseminated by interfaces and collective imagery they produce and represent have been reshaped globally. Visual cultures were disseminated by cinematic forms, through its hegemonic prevalence in capitalism (Beller, 2012). They were adapted to mediate digital modes that configure contemporaneity and contemporary collective practices that are shaped under their "dynamic of fluids", through "network" concepts or "rhizomatic" configurations²². "Memory in Motion" (2016) also collects several contributions such as Yuk Hui, Tiziana Terranova, Jussi Parikka and show the relevance of such encounter of fields.

This analysis situates the debates around visual production and its material cultural techniques in a spectrum of cultural production in digital times. These intersections draft upon an assessment of critical perspectives on the impact of digital technology on "*digital subject*" and its consequent cultural production. This line of research with a focus on "cultural production", under the influence of Maurizio Lazzarato and Autonomist tradition, Antonio Negri or Paolo Virno, uses concept of *free labour*, "source of economic value in the digital economy". Tiziana Terranova developed notions of "free labour" since "Free Labour: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy" (2000) or "Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age" (Pluto Press, 2004).

To what this research concerns, a conceptual link to underline here are a hypothesis that *attention economy* notion can be part of an upgraded digital culture version of the conception of "*Shadow Work*" defined by Ivan Illich - "My interest is in that entirely different form of unpaid work which an industrial society demands as a necessary complement to the production of goods and services. This kind of unpaid servitude does not contribute to subsis-

²¹ David Chandler and Christian Fuchs, eds. 2019. *Digital Objects, Digital Subjects: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Capitalism, Labour and Politics in the Age of Big Data*. London: University of Westminster Press. ISBN 978-1-912656-20-2.

²² A relevant assertion of the concept of network is present in several authors, from Zygmunt Bauman to Wendy Chun.

tence. Quite the contrary, equally with wage-labour, it ravages subsistence. I call this complement to wage-labour "Shadow-work."²³ (Illich, 1980, p.8) - as informal - now formless, and liquid activities, commodified under capitalist politics, that the author opposes to vernacular values and communities in "Le Genre Vernaculaire", (Ivan Illich, 1982), whose ethics and practices will be taken in this study as part of a theoretical-practical proposal of constituent communities.

2.7 Apparatus versus Apparatus

"But where danger is, grows
the saving power also."

(Hölderlin, quoted in "The question concerning technology", Martin Heidegger, 1954)

In this *status quo* of "machinic enslavement" (Lazzarato, 2014) or existence, *techné* question remains and is central: what is this powerful construct of such a technological constraint in social life and its cultural and political forms, at last, existence on Earth? What are its strengths and affordances upon which critical and emancipatory strategies can be defined as a breakthrough?

The clarification of a position around *technology* and mediation definitions should be made, once *techné* and media circulate dialectically. Around debates of technological affordances and its status, this study takes into account the fundamental essay "The question concerning technology" by Martin Heidegger (1954) and its implications. Thus something very effective and fertile in subsequent conceptions of technology was launched in this text, as an anchorage of the *techné* problem into the category of *revealing*. "What is?" an "essence", and a possible liberation from an "instrumental reason" to technique, freeing human relations to its truth, it is aimed through a process of knowledge, as *Aletheia*, setting thinking of technology into a philosophical level of potential "Enframing". However, there exists a danger of creating standing-reserves, "a soil as a mining field" and an extrapolated god *Ex-Machina* of a *techné* conception, adaptable to the modern technological-scientific paradigm of economic capitalist society. "Technology is a mode of revealing. Technology comes to presence [West]

²³ Philosophica 26,1980 (2), Pp. 7-46.

in the realm where revealing and unconcealment take place, where *Aletheia*, truth, happens". To be set free into the open, men have to belong to a realm of destining, not by obeying, but by listening and hearing.

In Holderlin verse resides another potential, argued Martin Heidegger, the power of saving. A power of saving that frames and leads to revelation. Defining *techné*, apparatus, whose tension between danger and freedom, presents a theoretical framework to approach a dynamics of power relations in those dialectics of collective appearances. Another *poiesis* - revealing that brings forth - inscribed into a realm of *techné*, following Martin Heidegger's argument, is Art. An Art conceived as "the bringing-forth of the true into the beautiful was called *techné*". Even if Art was not an aesthetic experience, but a *poietic* one, a revealing one.

On a late edition of collected essays, "Les Carrefours du Labyrinthe" (1978) Cornelius Castoriadis wrote an essay, "Technique" (p. 289), where he develops an etymological analysis of an evolution of the question of technique from the Greek verb "*teuchō*", and its ancient meanings. For Homer, it meant to produce, to fabricate, as the substantive "*teuchos*" meant tool, as in weapon, the primordial tool (tool of war and survival). After its passage to "*tuktos*", that also means an efficient doing and *techné*, fabrication, to do skills with efficiency, and in the specific case of knowledge and *episteme* - *efficient knowledge*. Castoriadis refers André Leroi-Gourhan studies in "Technique et Langage"(1964) and reminds an argument as that of the human capacity to produce symbols and objects, as a central piece in this dialectic of production of modern "homo faber", in opposition to greek *zoon logon echon*, that constitutes mediated and mediating *techné*, machine and technology. "Toute société crée son monde, interne et externe, et de cette création la technique n'est ni instrument ni cause, mais dimension ou, pour utiliser une meilleure métaphore topologique, partie partout dense"(Castoriadis, 1978, p.293).

Castoriadis also quotes Lewis Mumford and "The Myth of the Machine" (Mumford, 1967), who underlines the importance of social organization as - "une des inventions les plus extraordinaires de l'histoire a été la construction non pas d'une machine matérielle quelconque, mais de la "machine invisible", machine du "travail" or "méga-machine". What technical and technological processes are those of such mega-machine? Castoriadis does not conclude: "Il n'y a certes pas d'économie capitaliste sans technique capitaliste – mais il est lumineusement évident qu'il a pas de technique capitaliste sans économie capitaliste". Taking the ety-

mology of word *techné* in this small text of Castoriadis, what is at stake here is a governance of efficiency of production modes.

These line of thought is present as modulation of *oikonomia*, as in Agamben's re-reading of Michel Foucault's apparatus concept. In "What is an Apparatus?"(2009) Giorgio Agamben delimits a definition from an extract of Michel Foucault's interview with Paul Rabinow: - "What I am trying to single out with this term is, first and foremost, a thoroughly heterogeneous set consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions-in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the network that can be established between these elements". (in Agamben, 2009, p.2).

Giorgio Agamben tries to establish a relationship between the government of men and the Latin term *disponere*. Apparatus or *oikonomia* is thus a net, a group that extracts subjects from beings - "What is common to all these terms is that they refer back to this "oikonomia. That is, to a set of practices, bodies of knowledge, measures, and institutions that aim to manage, govern, control, and orient - in behaviours purports to be useful- the behaviours, gestures, and thoughts of human beings."(Agamben,2009,p.2) Through which apparatus, which subjects are expropriated from men, workers and digital natives.

If the "21st-century contemporary multinational military-industrial techno-capitalist system"²⁴. It is foundational of apparatus, a strategy to present here is already there in Foucault's definition, reenacted by Agamben reading: "I said that the nature of an apparatus is essentially strategic, which means that we are speaking about a certain manipulation of relations of forces, of a rational and concrete intervention in the relations of forces, either to develop them in a particular direction, or to block them, (stabilize them, and to utilize them). Apparatus is always inscribed into a play of power, but it is also always linked to certain limits of knowledge that arise from it and, to an equal degree, condition it. The apparatus is precisely this: a set of strategies of the relations of forces supporting, and supported by, certain types of knowledge."(Agamben, 2009, p.2)

²⁴ This expression is used in Eric D. Meyer review of "The Use of Bodies" by Giorgio Agamben in https://marxandphilosophy.org.uk/reviews/8271_the-use-of-bodies-review-by-eric-d-meyer/

Apparatus, a play of powers, is in one hand, what inscribes, but also what *blocks*, what organizes but also limits certain forms of knowledge production: Organizes power and counter-power, regulation and resistance.

Another text that retakes the apparatus question in Michel Foucault context is "What is a dispositif?" by Gilles Deleuze²⁵. This text closes the triangle of possibilities of resistance, introducing the subjectivity and *subjectivation* in the concept of the apparatus. It is a horizon of scape, that overflies from disciplinary societies to control one in Deleuze's text²⁶ and enables emergent forms and thus, resistance. Deleuze reading of the conception of apparatus in "What is a dispositif?" on "Michel Foucault Philosopher" (1992), brings here an answer to the possibility of its own "blockade", hence apparatus, as in his conception is - "a tangle, a multilinear ensemble". As seen, like this, it reverses orderly conceptions of apparatus - "homogeneous in their own right, object, subject, language" to a trace of different dances, "arcs off-balance" "drawing together and then distancing themselves from one another".

Knowledge, Power and Subjectivity are not static but under variations. These "moving lines", lead to sedimentation, but are also "lines of breakage, "of fracture", and to untangle them, one has to position oneself into social apparatus, "working on the ground". (p.159). These lines and folds are also folds of the machine and the assemblage, the assembly or the concatenated social machine that Gerald Raunig enunciates in "Thousand Machines" (2007).

2.8 Resistant Machines

These traversal scenarios of apparatus entail an investigation upon a definition of *machine*. A machine entangles the nodes of *the socius*, "social machine" inherits war machine, theatrical machine and abstract machine, as lined up in "A Thousand Machines"(Semiotext(e), 2007) by Raunig, referencing "Mille Plateaus" (Deleuze et Guattari, 1980). Under Gerald Raunig attention, starting with "Fragments on Machines" by Karl Marx, are production processes and means of labour metamorphoses that constitute emergent machines as "a moving power that moves itself". A movement, an assemblage of machinic

²⁵ Deleuze, G. (1992). 'What is a Dispositif?' in T.J. Armstrong (ed), *Michel Foucault Philosopher*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf pp. 159-168.

²⁶ Deleuze text's, "Postscriptum on the Societies of Control"(October, 1992)

pieces, *concatenated*, like in his favourite action verb, as a "social body" since Deleuze and Guattari, a hybrid machine that has surpassed a human abstraction and a tool conception.

In Raunig's argument, a machine is - "not a question of the essence, but of the event" - focusing on touching surfaces - "about the and, about concatenations and connections, compositions and movements that constitute a machine"(Raunig, 2007,p.19). Bicycles changed forever - "Therefore, it is not a matter of saying "the bicycle is..." - a machine for instance, but rather "the bicycle and the person riding it", rather a visible juxtaposition - "the bicycle and the person and the bicycle and the person mutually supporting one another" - and of course, bicycle thieves - a reference to Vittorio De Sica film, "Ladri di Biciclette" (De Sica, 1948). A machine is an event, a concatenation, an individual, his technical object and a collective event, or an event of a collective.

MayDay Machines, referring to Mayday movements in Europe are a starting point to an analysis of *social machines* that preceded social uprisings of 2011 movements in the European context of crisis. As Antonio Negri writes: "Mayday is an autonomous process today, a network in which many individuals and subjectivities (...) act; (...) it is a process of the re-composition and the constitution of a new post-Fordist proletariat." (in "Goodbye Mr Socialism", quoted in "MayDay Machines", Raunig, 2007, p.75).

As analyzed through Mayday movements and parades in Europe, Raunig drafts the contours of a possible socio-political-cultural-techno-economical-digital concatenated configuration with consequences as 2011 first global events brought to evidence. Hence an emergent social machine is in march, one that tries to organize *precarious existences*, but also to create "instruments of collective knowledge production and militant research into current modes of working and living"(Raunig, 2007, p.76). These social machines of Mayday Parades shape conflict and paradox, at the same time, in precarious modes of *subjectivation* in contemporary forms of labour. Raunig sees in the examples of parades in Europe (Barcelona or Vienna, for example²⁷) part of the "machinic practice of inventing and concatenating bodies and signs" in a multidimensional re-appropriation of the cities. Simultaneously close to the ubiquitous potential of digital media and digital culture constitution of a hybrid public sphere.

²⁷ Portuguese MayDay movement has been contemporary of this kind of configurations, since their public demonstrations, even with public performances, have informed Raunig's "machinery" in 2000 decade. See for example, its youtube channel "[MayDayLisboa](#)", or this particular performative vídeo- "[A Precariedade congela-nos a vida](#)". Last Accessed April 2020.

These movements echoing MayDay origins of radical struggle, brought to a political arena a reconfiguration of current collective appearances, as global movements or machinic constitutions, and movements "as a process, as an ongoing struggle"(Raunig, 2007, p.77), crucial to the construction of the abstract machine - "two temporalities, not only that of the event, the parade, the actions around it, but also the long duration of constituent practice, in which the context of the abstract machine as a movement problematizing precarization becomes evident" (Raunig, 2007, p.89).

An initial fuse to social movements of 2011 in Europe should be placed in the foundational Arab Springs and its insurrectional *subjectivization*. However, it was also through digital communication and its devices along several concatenations of social bodies of precarious assemblages in EuroMaydays, that events like "Movimento da Geração à Rasca", 15th of May in Madrid or even, the overseas "Occupy Wall Street", had pre-configured themselves as different constituent corpus.

Digital culture and its media can expropriate individual attention, but also organize collective action on a global scale, as the social uprisings of the beginning of the 21st century brought to evidence. It is possible to talk about power relations between different forces and forms of knowledge, that also create different forms of resistance. Brought to the front line, digital media culture and its social, cultural and aesthetic declinations are part of a political economy, with the argument that apparatus can also be a place to its blockades and emancipatory resistances.

2.9 "Movements of the Squares" | Moments of Uprising

In 2011, technological affordances of digital society were accomplished as political possibilities of counter-power. The momentum of the second decade of the 21st century was punctuated by moments of economic crisis and indignation, bankruptcies and new social movements. The year of 2011, following Manuel Castell's survey and chronology, started in January with Arab Springs insurrections in Tunisia and Egypt, manifesto-demonstrations against precariousness in Lisbon in March, indignation against financial crisis in May, and September finished with Occupy Wall Street movement, contesting capitalist system, its structures of power and inequality of wealth distribution in the world.

"Networks of Outrage and Hope" (Manuel Castells, 2013) begins with a loss of confidence, "Governments were denounced. Media were suspected. Trust vanished.", without which "the social contract dissolves and people disappear". Nevertheless, individuals came together through alternative networks, digital virtual links for new social movements, that nonetheless exist in an autonomous space, in a mass society of auto communication. The network society contains the information technologies and telecommunications, the global connectivity that structures the financial system, which collapsed under the weight of its speculation algorithms, but also ubiquitous social media and the 2.0 Web. It informs the hybrid public spaces where the demonstrations took place. Protests were organized to come out to the streets and occupy the protest spaces in the real cities, direct action on a "big data" scale becoming local²⁸.

Technological affordances of digital culture were exposed that year, crucially, as political possibilities in digital societies, questioning structures of the established powers, and inequality systems, as practices of unexpected collective action with the aim of social change. The possible political circulation happens nowadays between the self digital prosumer of audiovisual contents, as a consequence that *everybody is a media outlet* (Clay Shirky, 2008) and the multitudes constitutions (Negri, 2000; Virno, 2003). Contemporary collectives which are not conditioned by group identities, but by a set of expressions of differences, with a focus on a spontaneous digital economy, an unprecedented share of digital materials, multimedia symbols, images and tweets, memes, gifs, videos. A non-controllable popular and vernacular lexicon in the space of social media.

To Castells, these movements "of Outrage and Hope" ignored affiliations to political parties, mistrusted traditional media, rejected leaderships and formal organizations. They founded their action in a hybrid public space, between the Internet, social media, occupied squares in the cities and the assemblies that took place there. These are the social movements of the 21st century, thus places where emancipation and social transformation occurred. According to his previous work, "Communication and Power"(2009) to Manuel Castells, power relations are constituents of society, and those who have the power of communication can shape social institutions, through coercion and violence or by symbolic manipulation - "But

²⁸ On the relationships between the occupied public space and activism or uprising movements Manuel Castell's references go back to his work, "*The city and the grassroots: a cross-cultural theory of urban social movements*", No. 7. University of California Press, 1983.

where is power, there is counter-power (...), the ability to social actors challenge the imbued power in the institutions of society, to get the representation of their own values and interests" (Castells, 2013, p.23). This capacity of *agency* is fundamental to the negotiation of power and counter-power. This negotiation is implicated in communicational relations that are established and the consequent construction of meaning that occurs. What Castells stresses as socialized communication in the public sphere that is structural to a negotiation of power, as well to the in-depth changes that technological mediation brought to communication - "The transformation in the course of information technologies in digital era extend the reach of mass media to every domain of social life, in a network that is, at the same time, global and local, generic and personalized in an ever-changing pattern" (Castells, 2013, p.23).

At this moment, it became possible to contemporary social actors, individuals and collectives, to build autonomy and claims, to pose emancipatory hypothesis. To Castells, a primary question reveals - "when, how and why, one person or a thousand decides individually to do something about something that is repeatedly told not to do?". Within this context, to understand agency it is necessary to understand singular motivations, the networks that are developed and communication dynamics of these networks in collective action, with a negotiation of interests and shared values, related with society in general that activates individuals to "participate in a multimode assault against an unfair order" (Castells, 2013, p.30).

With these events and the global impact that these social movements had, several lines of research were developed in social movements studies, sociology, urban studies, political and social theory. This study proposes a focus on the impact of digital media in these movements, in order to address the specific case of video sharing in public online platforms, as participatory strategies within the protest moments. Protest images circulating as political action.

One thing to consider is the strong textual connection present in these studies and following researches made around social media like *Twitter* and *Facebook* platforms. This research analyzes the matter of shared videos of such movements in online video sharing platforms like Youtube.com, with a historical connection with some of these movements²⁹The video production is more scarce than discourse production. This study attempts to analyze a universe of digital moving images produced in this context and circulation.

²⁹. For example, the impact of video uploads of the Iranian Green Movement on the global knowledge of contestation to the regime in the Presidential elections in 2009.

On the other hand, "*Arab springs*" historical events and imagery have been rapidly absorbed into academic and filmic endeavour appropriated by new contexts like in interactive documentary and multimedia production, as the example of "[Filming Revolution](#)" or "[18daysin-Egypt](#)"³⁰

Although, in order to juxtapose "movements of the Squares"³¹ *machines* with the individual level in its European context, recent research has been done by Anastasia Kavada, Donatella Della Porta or Paolo Gerbaudo, about configurations of social movements in a global era of digital communication regimes and new individual identities, or the transformations that have been occurring, focusing on contemporary digital social movements. Paolo Gerbaudo work "*Tweets and the Streets*" (Pluto Press, 2012) takes an account on the forming assemblies, galvanizing action through *Facebook* or *Twitter* on the streets, rhizomatic structures of the movements and their "liquid leaderships". Concepts of "digital protest identities" (Gerbaudo, 2014) or "creating collectives" (Kavada, 2014) are studies that reflect about impacts of digital media and digital culture society on collective action organization, individual levels of activism and social movements.

In "*Social Movements and Political Agency in Digital Age: A Communication Approach*" (2016)³², Kavada proposes an essential variation to the constitution of collective movements on digital media context, once political agency within previous lines of thought about collective action is bound with conceptions of "collective as singular, unified, homogeneous, coherent and mass". Digital media have shaped a constitution of collective differently, once is "thought to facilitate more decentralized, dispersed, temporary and individualized forms of political action" that would lead "to view the collective in loosed terms, as a process rather than a finished product", focusing on communicational impacts of dialogical possibilities of "*communication as conversation*".

To understand from a historical perspective, its dynamics and organizational conflicts of social movements references are of works of Della Porta and Mattoni (2012), Bennett (2012) and Charles Tilly (2005). Although the relevance of the social analysis of such contemporary movements as an example of Tilly's WUNC analysis applied (acronym of Worthi-

³⁰ projects. "#18DaysInEgypt." <http://www.18daysinegypt.com/>. Last accessed in April 2020.

³¹ Paolo Gerbaudo expression in the article "*Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism*", <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt183pdzs>

³² DOI: 10.17645/mac.v4i4.691

ness, Unity, Numbers, Commitment), the aim of this study is elsewhere. Instead, this study focus, in a digital communication context as the one described by Castells, on produced digital images and their shared destiny in online video platforms. These common moving images are the thread work of this study. To a necessary understanding that social movements depend on communication mechanisms, this study focus on the role of these "protest images" on the context of a "contemporaneity" that moves within "multimodal digital networks" which "are the fastest, autonomous, interactive, reprogrammable and self-extendable mass media of History" (Castells, 2013, p.32).

2.10 A Portuguese protest

Even if there is a need to separate political and cultural different configurations, the impact and repercussions of the "Arab springs" and the western movements of 2011, the technological affordances were similar in both contexts. The "rhizomatic revolution" that Manuel Castells mentions about Spain and "Democracia Real Ya" had the same contours as the "Geração à Rasca" in Portugal.

However, this study argues that to a recent historical perspective of these movements, the Portuguese one has a strategic relevance. It bridged the Arab contexts, with their repressive political regimes and specific protests with a more diffuse and global rejection of neoliberalism in European countries democracies. The Portuguese protest, in its unique conditions, was the first to incorporate the energy of Arab protests, the technological affordances of digital culture to organise the demonstration and the overwhelming impotence feeling about economic and social conditions and expanded it, consolidating into political action a global need to protest against precarious lives in Western democratic states. After it, even if more organised or enduring, Democracia Real and Occupy, in Spain and the USA, absorbed an energy of "protest potential" essayed on the 12 March 2011 from Portugal.

This demonstration was mostly attuned with the international agenda as José Soeiro claims in his article "From *Geração à Rasca* to *Que se Lixe a Troika*: Portugal in the new international cycle of protest" (Soeiro, 2014)³³. The events led hundreds of thousands of people

³³ Soeiro, José. (2014). Da Geração à Rasca ao Que se Lixe a Troika: Portugal no novo ciclo internacional de protesto. *Sociologia*, 28, 55-79. Recuperado em 21 de fevereiro de 2019, de http://www.scielo.mec.pt/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0872-34192014000200004&lng=pt&tlng=pt. Last accessed April 2020.

to the streets in different Portuguese cities. The first European social movement after the financial crisis of 2008. An informal, non-party group used social media, mainly Facebook to spread a "protest of a generation"³⁴ Clearly against "precarious life conditions".

One crucial aspect to the chronology of events is that this movement, pressured by the political events on Portuguese scenario, came from a lineage of MayDay events groups, gathered through organised collective action associations against precariousness like "[FER-VE](#)" ou "[Precários Inflexíveis](#)". Some of these groups disappeared, some were transformed into formal associations³⁵. The group of organisers are nowadays connected with another political association, [Academia Cidadã](#), an activist group that intends to empower "active citizenship" and, among various actions, makes "professional activism" within European networks, a way of life as educational tools.

The protest itself had many-layered meanings, such as the importance of music and "protest song" in it, once a popular humour-singing group appeared in the protest and had a significant impact in its own dynamics. The resonance it had came from the 70s protest song in Portugal and its importance in the representation of a counter-culture and political resistance during the dictatorship. This participation in the event was even more relevant, once "Homens da Luta"³⁶, roughly translated as "Men of the Fight" dressed out as 70s hippies, were well mediatic and were Eurovision Portuguese representants that year.

Although these conditions and facts, Portuguese protest did not have recognition of its impact on the chronology of protests of that year. Why did it happen like this?

One possible explanation to this non-inscription of the Portuguese movement in the international account of such movements is perhaps the non-occupation of uprising spaces, through traditional concepts as barricades or settlements as the Spanish *acampadas* that happened later. The non-occupation of the streets with a political strategy of mobilisation can be an explanation, once thousands of people in the streets of Lisbon silently reacted to semi-improvised organisation conditions and emotional speeches by the movement leaders at the end

³⁴ The protest had a written manifest in his origin, with a first public presentation, read by the four organisers and filmed, widely spread through social media. "[The precarious generation manifest](#)". The youtube connection of the "presentation of the movement" is <https://youtu.be/7IT5yIxs9nQ>. Last accessed April 2020.

³⁵ On the Portuguese anti-precariousness movements, several blogs, associations and platforms with a digital dynamic were in the terrain.

³⁶ To a better understanding of this connection, the Wikipedia page of the group establishes the references: https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homens_da_Luta. Last accessed April 2020.

of the traject, and went home. The parade model previously used in annual MayDays' events, with a beginning, a predetermined path and an end, perhaps compromised the efficiency of its political temporality when adapted as an attempt of more protest configurations.

However, the particular case of [Deolinda](#) concerts, another Portuguese popular music band, near the date of the demonstration and the audience reaction to a song that talks about internships as the perpetuation of instability life conditions. "[Parva que sou](#)" is an exemplar of digital multimodal, viral contamination of auto communication of masses. The spread of a video of a concert with the right timing, aligned with the planning of the event ignited unpredictable crowds pinning its Achilles' heel, "precarious life".

2.11 Portraits of Multitudes | Precarious Subjects

It is necessary to take into account a characterisation of a collective subject, that takes part into collective action, to establish authorship of possible collective portraits, made of heterogeneous fragments of digital images produced and shared by decentered individual authors. For the constitution of such a polyphonic and polysemic collective subject, made of different plurals and singulars this work recurs to a concept as multitudes in order to understand the paradoxical constitution of such collective subjects and their constituent power. It is upon a conception of contemporary subjects, or "multitudes" and their significance as heterogeneous constellations in Antonio Negri's and Paolo Virno that this work reflects about an irregular composition on the structure of its subject.

"Multitude", or "postmodern social class", as Silvère Lotringer wrote in the Introduction of Paolo Virno "A Grammar of the Multitude" (2004) oscillates between the tension of "struggle looking for a class", as in "Empire" (Hardt, Negri, 2000) terms, or a class looking for a struggle, in Virno *multitude* concept. The definition presents the debate between Hobbes and the concept of *people* and Spinoza and the concept of *multitude*, that has taken its way in Virno words: "For Spinoza, the multitude indicates a plurality which persists as such in the public scene, in collective action, in the handling of communal affairs, without converging into a One, without a centripetal form of motion. A multitude is the form of social and political existence for the many, seen as being many: a permanent form, not an episodic or interstitial form." (Virno, 2004, p.21) However this debate goes, either more Negri and Hardt or Vir-

no on its resolution and configurations, what concerns here are the reverse conditions of such multitudinal ontologies.

As a reverse condition, is meant a *precarious condition*, or precariousness, where singular subjects are part of a regime with its vulnerability dynamics of life in contemporaneity, in its social, economic, political and cultural aspects. The post-Fordist working class, now a non-reducible singular, but a communal network of singularities has at its centre, working conditions and modes of production developed under late capitalism, in a regime of precariousness, of obsolescence, of immediacy, pervasive and invasive in several spheres and under the digital regime, formed into the "liquidity" paradigm, as in Zygmunt Bauman conceptions.

To address this conjuncture, Alex Foti "General Theory of Precariat - Great Recession, Revolution, Reaction" (Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam, 2017) widely defines this global social group - "The precariat is millions-strong in Europe, North America, East Asia, indeed in all the countries existing under contemporary informational capitalism. Who is precarious? A call centre operator is precarious. A fast-food worker is precarious. A temp coder is precarious. An adjunct professor is precarious. In fact, all youth living and working under informational capitalism are precarious. The precarious are the underpaid, underemployed, unprotected, overeducated, and overexploited." (Foti, 2017, p. 9).

Today power relations are not clear enough if seen only through the lenses of class struggle, but this is not a statement of the disappearance of class, nor the lack of necessity to position and define a vindication line. The "exception" of "precariat" or "lumpenproletariat", in Marx, in neoliberal societies is being normalised in its core structure, playing the immune-precarious game, trading insecurity and anxiety. Isabell Lorey in "The State of Insecurity" (Verso Books, London/New York, 2015) takes several variations into account. Precarity, precarization and precariousness are negative configurations of multitudes. Not *precariousness* present in Judith Butler's concept in "Precarious Life" (2006) of an ontological dimension of lives and bodies and consequent philosophical effects of such condition, that - "does not denote an anthropological constant, no trans-historical state of being human, but rather a condition proper to both human and nonhuman living beings" (Butler, 2006). However, this is also a political definition, in the sense that it is relational.

Isabell Lorey distinguishes more different dimensions of precarious: *precarity* - “a category of order that denotes the effects of different political, social and legal”³⁷ (Lorey, 2011) aspects of the segmentation as conditions of inequality, the hierarchisation of “*being-with*” which accompanies processes of “*Othering*”. Nevertheless, along comes *governmental precarization*, a third dimension, which refers to modes of governing, nowadays connected with technological capitalist complexes, that destabilise societies through labour wages but also ways of living, creating inequality and insecurity. A puzzling effect is, however, that - “A governmental perspective allows for *precarization* to be considered not only in its repressive, striating forms, but also in its ambivalent productive moments, as they arise through techniques of self-government”(Lorey, 2015). There are different aspects to consider here: the Foucault regime of self-government, but also the technological possibilities of “self-distraction”, or the attention economy.

Contemporaneity can be understood as, in a metaphorical figuration, a composite of multitudes of precarious individuals, increasingly defined as quantifiable data, preferably connected, through screen-based computed experiences of global dimensions in capitalist technological invasive apparatus, since organic life, human and nonhuman until the cultural experiences of aesthetic dimensions. Precarious life in a digital mesh³⁸.

2.12 Crystals of Uprising

A tension between collective and singular is reinforced in a map of different pluralities, without uniformity or disappearance of the singular. Returning to Castells and his conclusions on 2011 social movements: “To an individual level, social movements are emotional movements. Insurrection does not start with a program or a political strategy”. (Castells, 2013, p.31). Fear or enthusiasm are the emotions of collective mobilisation.

As an image, an uprising is at the same time movement and stillness. I am thinking the concept of *an image as an emotional crystallisation*, shaping time and space. As politics,

³⁷ Isabell Lorey “Governmental Precarization”, 01 2011, accessed <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0811/lorey/en> 21 December 2018

³⁸ Is there a correlation between the “postmodernism as a cultural logic of neoliberalism” as in Fredric Jameson, and the “multitudes” and “precariat class” thriving digital collaborative aesthetics?

closing or opening, interiority to exteriority and the reverse movement, an encounter with otherness, as Hannah Arendt's proposal.

To develop this argument of a singular emotional action, parallel to emotional crystallisation of image is established a relation between framing categories of moving image. Time and space, within a cinematic framework, and the essay by Furio Jesi in "Spartakus, the Symbology of Revolt" (Jesi, 1978, 2014) guide this perspective. In this author's thesis, the conception of "uprising" works in different levels at the same time: the uprising and the concept of temporality exist in layered temporalities in a moment of revolt. Hence the appropriation of city space and negotiation and inscription of a system of symbols in collectiveness embed present action, memory and potential action. These processes happen as a consequence of what Jesi defines as "the suspension of historical time".

Jesi makes a distinction between a revolution and a revolt, a word "used to designate an insurrectional movement that differs from revolution". A primary difference between the two terms is not their aim, that is *seize power*, but instead, the main distinction is a "different experience of time". Revolution would be "a strategic complex of insurrectional movements" whose objectives would be inscribed in the long-term - "deliberately immersed in historical time". Revolt, "is a sudden insurrectional explosion, which can be placed within a strategic horizon but which does not in itself imply a long-distance strategy". As a consequence revolt "suspends historical time", once "it suddenly institutes a time in which everything that is done has a value in itself, independently of its consequences and of its relations with the transitory or perennial complex that constitutes history" (Jesi, 2014, p.46). This process happens as a commitment of those who take part in the revolt - "of their individuality to an action whose consequences they can neither know nor predict". Jesi reference is the Spartakusbund revolt in 1919 that led to the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.

Although the social movements and uprisings of the 21st Century had different contours on the combatant expectations and consequences, the energies of the movement matter. A revolt or an uprising space can be seen as an interspace and inter-time constitution between the individual self-inscription and the collective. It means - "every revolt is a battle, but a battle in which one has deliberately chosen to participate", once the instant of choice, or emotional decision, in Castells argument, in the instant of revolt "determines one's sudden self-realisation and self-objectification as part of a collectivity". The communal patrimony is one of

the actions and symbols, "Everyone experiences the epiphany of the same symbols - everyone's individual space, dominated by one's personal symbols, by the shelter from the historical time that everyone enjoys in their individual symbology and mythology" (Jesi, 2014, p.53) expands, becoming the symbolic space common to an entire collective, a shelter from historical time. In which the "collective finds safety" (Jesi, 2014, p.53). This suspension also involves very concise aspects, as a need of "precise borders in historical time and historical space".

City spaces, as well condensed in the idea of the squares, and the subsequent term "movements of the Squares" coined by Paolo Gerbaudo, as seen before, lead to the same line of thought - "only in the hour of the revolt is the city really felt as your own city- because it belongs to the I but at the same time to the "others", and with a coherent notion that every act is valuable in and of itself, in its immediate consequences" (Jesi, p.54-55). Immediacy and inscription as within moving image reference. Filmic time is a suspended one, as space is a particular detached space, dialectically circulating between real space and emotional projected ones. Another important aspect to this study is the impact of symbolic construction upon gestures, acts and inscriptions of the revolt *suspended time*, where symbolic power images were fueled. The propelled energy by images, like photographs of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, framed political theatre and "revue" presentations "to show that the social revolution continued to take place, even after the terrible disaster of 1919" with their *images*, as part of this perpetual movement of the revolt, suspended as potentials. (Jesi, 2014, p.95)

These are the elements to such a critical political state, permanent uprising, the one considered by Furio Jesi as belonging to the "untimeliness" of revolt, according to with the author affirmation "revolution is timely, revolt untimely" (Jesi, 2014, p.166). Like cinema, where death has no temporality, is always a presence, either as persistence or as an absence. This essential parts of Furio Jesi readings on the revolts, written itself upon the events of May 68, evokes a circular and perpetual temporality to the uprisings like the ones from digital times of 2011, although with a more elaborate virtual constitution of such "hybrid spaces" of revolt along with multimodal communication gestures of an uprising.

To what interests here, symbols of the insurrection can also be the produced images, moving images, as suspended in time and space, out of historical timelines, creating their own emotional potential, their own crystals. These constellations of images are the digital objects that were uploaded as traces and symbols of the protests of 2011, even if each one had

different contexts and contours. As Gilles Deleuze wrote in his "Les Cristaux de Temps", the 4th chapter of "L'Image Temps" (Paris, Editions du Minuit, 1985), "cinema does not only present images to the world, it also surrounds them into the world" (my translation). It is part of a gesture of connection of actual images with remembrance images or dream images or even world-images.

For the philosopher, instead of enlarging, or expanding the image, it is its contraction, the possibility of the smallest circuit that functions as an interior limit of all other. and fixes "the actual image to an immediate double, symmetrical, consecutive or even simultaneous" - An image has itself a "virtual image, that corresponds to it, as a double or a reflection". The virtuality of the image is indiscernible, the coalescence of the actual image, and virtual image- "bi faced image, actual and virtual at the same time" (p.93). This potential image, actual and virtual, can be as an image of an uprising, an image without temporality. An untimely image.

These collective images are defined as political images, or "dialectical image". Thus, dialectical image as political image, (Georges Didi-Huberman, "La Survivance of the Fireflies", 2009) corresponds to an image "towards" the other, an image that exists in itself as a relation, as *touching otherness*. A dialectical image as a movement. A movement of rising up.

"(...) how true it is that the uprising is a gesture without end, continually starting again, sovereign just as we can call sovereign the desire itself or that instinct, the "push towards freedom" (Freiheit Drang) that Sigmund Freud spoke of. So, the domain of uprisings is potentially infinite." (from the Introduction, 2009, p.19).

The catalogue of "Soulèvements" presentation (Jeu de Paume, 2016) accompanied the exhibition and created a map of theories about this connection between emotional rash, uprising, its image and its political potency. Several texts represent a panoramic archipelago viewpoint of political philosophy, aesthetics, moving image *poiesis* and theory into fractal combinations to this gesture of "Uprising". Texts as Antonio Negri, Marie-José Mondzain, Nicole Brenez, Jacques Rancière and Judith Butler with Georges Didi-Huberman, present a necessary articulation and hypothesis for an anatomy of images of uprisings, as events, potentials, collectives, portraits - "How do images draw so often from our memories in order to give shape to our desires for emancipation?".

With this question, Didi-Huberman points a direction followed by this study. To the strength or rise, or energy, a form shall be shaped, a form appears - "A political anthropology of images should start from the fact that our desires need the energy of our memories, provided we create a form therein, a form that does not forget its origin, and that, therefore becomes capable of reinventing possibilities" (Didi-Huberman, 2016, p.20). A circuit between actual and virtual image is *dialectical* with its primordial movements, the uprising - *to rise, to stand in the face of, to appear*. Furthermore, it embodies the *passage* of energy to form, and from form to energy again, as potency. This can define the circulation of information, within another formulation nowadays, online video platforms, where people upload, create, share and watch thousands of videos.

Such was the case of the protest videos made and shared immediately in 2011 events, that can be an example of these urgent images. They were captured in the smallest circuit of the self, for a first time as a global collective gesture, from recording to distribution, to comment, to distribute, a political and aesthetic potential of such technological affordances. These images were captured and spread intensively and extensively. These moments correspond to emergent modes of political Art and cinema in one hand, but also the rise of a new artistic regime of collective action - **Artivism**.

2.13 Artivism | Commonist Art

The year of 2011 was a moment of large expression of a tempest announced for example in "The Coming Insurrection"(2009), by the Invisible Committee that had propelled an incendiary diagnosis on the contemporary, continued by "Declaration"(2012) by Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, in the aftermath of Occupy, but also a continuation text by Invisible Committee "To our Friends" (2015).

After the digital insurrectional turn that happened around the globe in the following years, in 2014, ZKM - Museum of Contemporary in Karlsruhe, Germany, coordinated by Peter Weibel, organised an extensive and intensive exhibition: *Global aCTIVism – Art and Conflict in XXI Century* with a relevant catalogue and a collection of texts on this thematic, including Peter Sloterdijk, Martha Rosler, Antonio Negri, Slavoj Žižek, Bruno Latour, each one drafting upon contours to a possible contemporary global revolution.

As Peter Weibel, director of the centre, curator and catalogue editor, opens his preface to describe the exhibition multiplicity:

"The exhibition documented the approaches, tactics, strategies and methods used in this "performative democracy" through photos, films, videos, blogs, social media and other documents disseminated through the mass media charted the first map of this global Activism. The "artivism" that arises from the combination of Activism and Art is perhaps the twenty-first Century's first new art form" (Weibel, 2014, p.23).

The exhibition and catalogue are organised from the concept of citizenship to Artivism, a conceptual statement on this overview. Starting with notions of activism and Citizen; Public and Private Sphere; How to do Activism and "Artivism" - Art and Activism. It is constructed through a systematic gesture of organising movements and activist expressions, following previous sections, with a panoramic of 21st Century and his antecedents, mostly public art forms, from Pussy Riot to Adbusters, Floating Lab Collective, or collective campaigns like "We are all Majid", Colectivo Etcétera, Emmedio, Erdem Gündüz.

Peter Weibel claims the existence of new critical citizenship and a performative democracy, framed through an evolution of the encounter between Art and politics. What is the role of the individual under a crisis of representation of the real, both in Art and politics? Consequently, all this was at the centre of a relation between Art, mediation and technology. The consequent politics of citizenship in the millennial passage of the 20th Century to the 21st Century is defined: "The viewer morphs into an artist, the consumer into a producer, the viewer into a user who participates directly in the production of Art. Art becomes part of the participatory process, and the participation finally becomes part of the artwork itself. In this way, the model is set for politics"(Weibel, 2014 p.53). Today, in 21st Century, the global citizen has an individual potential of insurrection, and each artist has the global arena of network society as a space of action - "Activism is the art form of the protest movement. It takes place outside of institutions and has a socially motivated, emancipatory basis. Art has a new agency (...) which results in a new kind of Activism: artivism." (Weibel, 2014, p.60).

On another edition of 2014, utopianism builds a bridge between two sides, technology and *Commonist Art*, another hypothesis of defining emancipatory artistic action as digital, along with the activist citizen. Lanfranco Aceti, in his editorial of "RED ART: New Utopias in Data

Capitalism", Leonardo Electronic Almanac, (vol.20, issue 1, 2014), puts it almost as a manifesto, the possibility of a utopian art in times of digital capitalism: "Red Art", or the coined *commonist art* - "becomes the sign of public revolts, in the physical squares or on the Internet", reflects upon its origins, - "art that emerges without institutional obstacles" leading to a strategy of a bottom-up constitution - "Gramsci would perhaps say that processed and blended through digital media and disseminated via the Internet" - a premise that would "enable Red Art to build up its own languages and aesthetics" (Aceti, 2014, p.11).

These interrogations on post-internet and new media as aesthetic agents of structural shifts on historical conjuncture defy our time frame categories enunciations, as their relevance appear cyclically. To the author this questions "the production of a Commonist Art of the 21st Century, that becomes autonomous and is legitimated by self-determination in the social, historical and technological context of today, makes more complex the selection and acceptance of rules in the artistic field" in hands with a crisis of its own space.

What Peter Weibel calls Artivism is here conceived by Aceti as an internal metamorphosis of conceptions of Art itself, somehow echoing situationist aesthetics manifests - "Red Art, the Commonist Art that perhaps is worth considering as Art, is the one that is self-elevated, built on the blood and bones of people still fighting in the 21st Century for justice, freedom or a piece of bread. Art that rallies crowds' likes and dislikes based on the whims of a liquid Internet structure where people support within their timelines an idea, a utopia, a dream or the image of a kitten" (Aceti, 2014, p.11). Between an individual and a collective that constitutes a social field, in Art as in politics, it becomes necessary to clarify concepts of space and space occupation. It is relevant to the constitution of places of protest, political and artistic, that are also a type of inscription in a hybrid public space.

How to constitute an artistic action there? Bill Balaskas focus on transforming possibilities of digital space in contemporaneity. This topos is a new ecosystem in itself: "The lesson that new media artists can learn from political osmoses catalysed by the economic crisis is that, in order to be effective, cyberspace should become part of a strategy that combines physical and online spaces, practically and conceptually" (Balaskas, 2014, p.12).

Art in the Digital is today in the position to capitalise participatory potentialities that have been revealed by socio-political events that defined the early 2010s. A reconceptualisation of *cyberspace as a cybertopos* is a constituent part of emergent grounds on which people

are called to stand and build. The author frames the space question: "*the emergence of a culture of "post-net participation"* in which digital media transcend physical space consolidating it (...), may allow us to explore "concrete utopias" to a greater extent than ever before in recent times. - "It is actively pursuing this objective, that we would expect to change the rules of the game. Artists are often the first to try"(Balaskas, 2014, p.13).

These lines of conceptualisation of a *potential activist* and a *potential space* contribute to the elementary structure of the proposed artefact in this study. Along with the agency of citizens to take action, it is also structural to define to others to participate in such collective portrait contribution, in what space will constitute this gesture. Heterotopian "Other Spaces", in Foucault terms, are needed. How can be envisioned longevity of digital artwork, as a possible expanded portrait in time, a perpetual composition movement of multitudes?

These questions claim for a reflection upon the temporality in the Art of uprisings and portraits of protest. The conjunction of Art and Activism, as introduced by Peter Weibel is well present in previous Gerald Raunig "Art and Revolution - Transversal Activism in Long Twentieth Century" (Semiotexte, 2007). Through a long march of artists and political sub-Gasworksevents and its "transversal" connections, since Tretyakov work (one of Raunig's favourite subjects) and Eisenstein on "Gaswork" theatrical presentation, German Activism in the 1910s, Courbet's "social painting" model, to the PublixTheatherCaravan in Genoa to unquestionable International Situationist Raunig reenacts an activist profile of Art, as critical experiences away from museums and market.

Following the author's framework, conceptions of an activist machine and its concatenations propose an empowering genealogy, set differently from Art History scholars, in their fields, shifting to "representing to constructing situations". A different practice of concatenation between this two fields takes into account the importance of its temporal composite, becoming - "art machines and revolutionary machines permanent and transversal" (Raunig, 2007, p.264) as part of *constituent powers* - "In these overlaps, the transversal concatenation of art and revolution develops in permanence and the specific temporality of the event, thwarting continuums of time and structuralisations of space". (Raunig, 2007, p.265).

2.14 Archival Modes of Documentary

Getting back to another Manuel Castells observation in "Networks of Outrage and Hope"(2013): "There was another meaningful effect of the presence of the movements on the Internet networks", underlines the author - *artistic, political creativity* - as examples of graphic design, avatar images, mini-documentaries, Youtube web series demonstrated.

"The power of images and creative narrative-activated emotions, both mobilising and soothing, created a virtual environment of art and meaning on which the activists (...) could rely to connect with the youth population at large, thus changing culture as a tool of changing politics- "Changing culture as a tool of changing politics." (Castells, 2013, p.107).

Jacques Rancière concept of "La partage du sensible"(La Fabrique, 2000) writes about the connection between aesthetic and political: "aesthetic acts as configurations of experience that create new modes of sense perception and induce novel forms of political subjectivity" (p.9) A possible application of this concept to the gestures of shared videos on Youtube.com, during these moments is empowering - "A distribution of the sensible therefore establishes at one and the same time something common (...) based on a distribution of spaces, times, and forms of activity that determines the very manner in which something in common lends itself to participation and in what way various individuals have a part in this distribution"(Rancière, 2000). Since this distribution was successfully disseminated in "*Arab springs*" movements and images of protest globally distributed after it, thus a definition to politics is developed: "Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who can see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time"(Rancière, 2000, p.11). A balance between vernacular and individual practices in one hand, along with artistic forms, a key to what they reveal as images and their potential politics: "Artistic practices are 'ways of doing and making' that intervene in the general distribution of ways of doing and making as well as in the relationships they maintain to modes of being and forms of visibility"(Rancière, 2000, p.11). It is no coincidence that this intuition was rapidly embodied in several projects.

With *Arab Springs* and its impact on global media visual practices, a set of multimedia art projects were released, pursuing very quickly the powerful potential of digital affor-

dances using political images with online archive databases. Such projects as [*18days in Egypt*](#), a self-named "collaborative documentary project" defined as: "For the first time in history, citizens are recording an actual real-time revolution. Throughout the 18 days of the 2011 uprising - Egyptians are filming pivotal events on their cell phones, taking pictures, texting, tweeting and Facebooking their extraordinary bid for freedom". This was a motto for a new era of doing political cinema, with collective participation and individual footage.

[*"TahrirArchives - Vox Populi - Archiving a revolution in a digital age"*](#) a work by Lara Baladi, one of the co-founders of "Tahrir Cinema" and multidisciplinary artist with several variations of work around this theme. "Tahrir Archives" was defined as an - "ongoing initiative since 2011, includes a series of media initiatives, artworks, publications, an open-source timeline and portal into web-based archives of the Egyptian revolution and its aftermath in the global context". or Alisa Lebow, [*Filming Revolution*](#), a *non-linear meta-documentary* about the Egyptian revolution, now also a book, edited by Stanford University Press. Peter Snowden made "The Uprising" (78 min, 2013) is a documentary made with Arab spring footage, and is part of his artistic-based doctoral dissertation: "The revolution will be uploaded: vernacular video and documentary film practice after the Arab spring" (2016). Peter Snowden arguments on the importance of *vernacular values*, a concept of Ivan Illich, here reenacted along with *performative assembly* theory of Judith Butler³⁹.

Thus, as the events in Tunisia and Egypt fuelled the protests in other parts of the globe, also appeared some linear films that framed the spirit of those years. With a political message, with archive footage, with a "collective" intention at its core structure. Such is the case of "Vers Madrid- the Burning Bright" (2013, 106 min.) de Sylvain George, or "Dreamocracy" of Raquel Freire (2014, 80 min.) about the Spanish movement and the Portuguese one, and also in the same tune "99%: The Occupy Wall Street Collaborative Film" (2013, 97 min. documentary), directed by Aaron Aites, Audrey Euwell, Nina Kristic, Lucian Read.

The encounter of collective action and cinema making, as expressed, is not new. Although memory and cinema, or history and cinema have been present in cinematographic fiction, documentary genre has been part of its expression also. Many authors and filmmakers entailed this conversation between political action and cinematic laboratory and its conditions of production as an encounter with the real and a possibility of social transformation. Such is

³⁹ Snowden's theories will be presented after in this study as one ground argument within the theoretical framework of communal possibilities of the developed prototype of a collaborative montage online platform film.

the case since Russian avant-gardes, direct cinema or the new waves cinemas in the seventies, along with some experiences with independent movements. In contemporary debates also the question of the reenactment of the archives as a source of *exposing realities* is present, validating the importance of the archival modes as social structures.

A debate in documentary studies, since classical texts, started with "Introduction to the documentary" (2017, 3rd edition) and "Representing Reality" (1991), by Bill Nichols. Nicholls defined some foundational modes in the genre, to date: expository, observational, interactive, reflexive and performative. Although a hybrid, as the efforts of Nichols in "Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Cultures" (1994) this organisational map leads to a settlement of new fields in the genre with new possibilities, as interactive documentaries or i-Docs appear to evidence. This theoretical organisation of a genre was a structure used by Sandra Gaudenzi for her "The Living Documentary"(2013). Although a fluent bibliography is at reach in the field, "Soul of the Documentary"(2015) by Ilona Hongisto, proposes a focus on the ethics and affects a strategy of sustainability to the relation with the world, defining documentary as an *open-ended process*, once "the end is merely a threshold". Following Vivian Sobchack, in the case of politics, the documentary is as a journey of experience, rather than an object or a revolution's manual. One idea to retain is "documenting the potential" present in a debate between "potestas" and "potentia" is closer to suspended temporality of uprisings.

Stella Bruzzi and the "New Documentary" (2006, 2nd Edition) puts a focus on the performative relations of the documentary, establishing a connection with Judith Butler questioning of "the real" as performative in "Gender Trouble"(1990) - "Documentary is predicated upon a dialectical relationship between aspiration and potential, that the text itself reveals the tensions between the documentary pursuit of the most authentic mode of factual representation and the impossibility of this aim" (from the Introduction).

Although these references refer to a different corpus of films as the subject of this study, these theoretical proposals open a debate of documentary out of "representational" and "authenticity" perspectives for documentary production and a post-cinematic condition of expanded visualities. Thus, *archive effect* is present in new approaches to documentary film studies such as in "Archive Effect-Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of His-

tory" (2013) by Jaimie Baron and "From Grain to Pixel"(2009) by Giovanna Fossati, which develops this discussion.

Georges Didi-Huberman in the fourth volume of "L'Oeil de L'Histoire - Peuples Figurants" calls for the "documentary tradition" of Walker Evans or August Sander when discussing modes to portray collectives, to the appearance of "peoples" on the one hand, but also as a way to make visible political layers of archival cinema, "à remonter l'histoire à la recherche des visages perdus" (Didi-Huberman, 2012, p. 148).

2.15 Expanding Documentary

If this approach opens new possibilities to documentary, also new modes of production in the digital era have expanded documentary to a post-cinematic era, where fields as i-docs, as referred before, are settling new possibilities of engagement of realities and spectatorship regimes. I-Docs appears as changing emergent audiovisual and multimedia production. Post-Cinema, closely related to Post-Media has been in recent years developing as recent works as overviews of Post-Cinema field evidence, including "Theorizing 21st Century Film", ed. by Shane Denson and Julia Leyda (Falmer: Reframe Books, 2016)⁴⁰ and Steven Shaviro, "Post Cinematic Affect" (New York: Zero Books, 2010), also D. N. Rodowick, "The Virtual Life of Film" (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), or Laura U. Marks, "The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses" (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000). To this study, a focus resides in a conversation within the field of **Interactive Documentary** exploring notions of expansion in cinematic and documentary forms, within contemporary art installations structures.

Into this dynamic field, that has an essential activity from profiles of scholars and practitioners, with a variety of people crossing academia and professional audiovisual production, namely amid Arts, Media and Television and Cinema Studies with a crescent interest by a global market connected with communication companies, TV channels or technological gadgets developers. Another factor to this interest is a quick production of theory about the works, close to concrete production of interactive documentaries. Furthermore, these relate to

⁴⁰ The discussion on post-cinema is related with the Post-Media. Some of the references are the same: again Félix Guattari, 'Vers une ère post-média', Terminal, 51 (1990), trans. into English as 'Towards a Post-Media Era', in Provocative Alloys: A Post-media Anthology, ed. by Clemens Apprich and others (Lüneburg: Post-Media Lab; London: Mute Books, 2013), pp. 26–27. And Peter Weibel "The Post Media Condition" (2006).

other aspects, that it is a well organised response to a momentum with several symposiums, research units and laboratorial modes of production, an intersection between academic research and professional markets with a strong presence in cinema festivals around the world.

[I-DOCS](#) cluster within this universe of Post-Cinema or Expanded Cinema, presents itself as a space - "Exploring Interactive Documentary Storytelling through articles, research and events"- with a dynamic updated agenda, developed from a team that includes Judith Aston, Sandra Gaudenzi, Mandy Rose, but also Anne Wiehl, Julia Scott-Stevenson and Arnau Gifreu. These team of scholars organises I-Docs symposium. "I-Docs, The evolving practices of interactive documentary"(Columbia University Press, 2015), edited by Judith Aston and Sandra Gaudenzi, give an overview, several articles on practice and theory from this "emerging field".

Another cluster is MIT Open Doc Lab, where artists like Lara Baladi, Katherine Cizek, author of *"HighRise"*, Arnau Gifreu, William Uricchio, are developing research. This centre also hosts a platform that works, along with Canada National Film Board as think-tank laboratories of production, developing and archiving meta-content and information of developed projects, a useful tool of an interdisciplinary approach, in a research perspective. When accessing [DocuBase](#), it gives access to "an interactive curated database of the people, projects and technologies transforming documentary in the digital age". Each project has information about the director, designer, used technology - an essential aspect, once final results depend strongly on this variable - and it becomes possible to understand emergent configurations of collaboration and co-creation in the field, with different types of teams, where design, for example, takes the lead in the production crew.

Sandra Gaudenzi in "Setting the Field"(Ashton, Gaudenzi, 2012) questions i-Docs as an opened technological mediated relation to reality and establishes, from Bill Nicholls genre-tree, also several modes of I-docs: *Conversational*, *Hypertext*, *Participative* and *Experiential*. To the question "What is an "i-Doc"?", a given answer - "any project that starts with the intention to engage with the real, and that uses interactive digital technology to realise this intention"⁴¹. This concept includes "web-docs, transmedia documentaries, serious games, cross-platform docs, locative docs, docu-games, pervasive media", and also Virtual Reality or 360°. This *openness* in the definition aligns with ever-changing conditions of a "fast-moving

⁴¹ <http://i-docs.org/about-interactive-documentary-idocs/> last accessed March 2020

field" and a need to adapt in a technological perspective, but also as an *expansive* language in itself, which is stressed in theoretical approaches as Patricia Zimmerman and Helen De Michiel in "Documentary as an Open Space"⁴² (in "The Documentary Film Book", ed. Brian Winston, 2013).

Mandy Rose is also a pioneer of participatory storytelling experiences in BBC where she started with the series "VideoNation" (94-2000) in the Community Programs Unit, described here as - "video cameras became smaller and easier to use during the Eighties and Nineties, Video Diaries became a popular format to take a look at people's lives."⁴³ Mandy Rose writings about I-docs are present for example in "The Journal of Documentary Studies" (Intellect Books 2013), "The Documentary Film Book" (Palgrave 2013) and "DIY Citizens; Critical Making and Social Media" (MIT Press 2014) She addresses themes as collaborative and participatory media and technologies behind its potential, as the example of the embedding of video files in HTML5 in social media platforms and its impact on a dynamics of these practices in more deepened social and cultural production configurations. "Were happy and we know it: Documentary, Data, Montage"⁴⁴ With Jon Dovey, or "This great Mapping of Ourselves - New documentary forms Online" (BFI Companion to Documentary Ed. Winston, Palgrave, 2013). To this study is relevant the perspective of the article "Not media about, but media with: co-creation for activism" (Rose, 2017) which reflects upon co-creation in documentary and i-docs.

It also focuses on participatory dimensions of this genre in the public sphere, and implications that digital communication networks bring to complexity of such interactions. Mandy Rose focuses on discussions that begin with earlier community media, empowerment media and collaborative documentary as Activism and collective social awareness, using a sense of a *shared anthropology* on Jean Rouch terms, first on a broadcasting audiovisual environment, then on "evolving i-Docs" field. Judith Aston also surpasses technological questions with some of her theoretical concerns anchored in ethnographic questioning around issues like polyphony, interaction, performance and possibles relations between oral traditions

⁴² in Brian Winston (ed.) The Documentary Film Book. London: BFI Press (355-365). Winston, Brian. *The documentary film book*. British Film Institute, 2013.

⁴³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/videonation/history/birth.shtml>

⁴⁴ Dovey, Jon, and Mandy Rose. "We are happy, and we know it: Documentary, data, montage." *Studies in Documentary Film* 6.2 (2012): 159-173.

and interactive archives, or interactive multimedia ethnography. Her later article⁴⁵ explores a potential engagement of i-docs with "Mikhail Bakhtin's expanded concept of polyphony", where her interests entangle a continuous conversation on interactive narrative and dialogical connections of several points of view. This author's work is outlined in this study from a perspective of expanding complexity from documentary structures like relation, social engagement, polyphony, performance within digital culture rather than an opposite process, applying technological devices to layer and compound reality.

2.16 Political Cinema

Nevertheless, what kind of cinema can address the question of the people to be seen?

To address questions of political cinema and its contemporary digital practices in collective and archival terms, this study follows a framework developed by scholar and practitioner Patricia Pisters and her ongoing study on *filmmakers as metallurgists*. In her article "The Filmmaker as Metallurgist: Political Cinema and World Memory" (Film-Philosophy 20, 2016:149-167)⁴⁶ this scholar analyses a present questioning of contemporary political cinema, and develops an argument, under Deleuze and Guattari influence of "geo philosophical ideas" from "A Thousand Plateaus" (1980), to address - "today's globalised and digital media world filmmakers have adopted different strategies to express a commitment to politics". The argument points to a difference, from earlier political cinemas: "Rather than directly calling for a revolution - "post-cinema" filmmakers with a political mission point to the radical contingencies of history; they return to the (audiovisual) archives and dig up never seen or forgotten materials". Although some of the films previously mentioned still claim for a revolution in terms, or through cinema, it is relevant to analyse the gestures Pisters points as "archival impulse", present in political commitment of cinema, reenacting it - "They reassemble stories, thoughts and affects, bending our memories and historical consciousness". Filmmakers as metallurgists, "mine the archives, bending the material images and sounds that contribute to our political consciousness"(Pisters, 2016, p.150). Following Deleuze and Guattari concepts of *metallurgy* as part of a "minority nomadic politics that subvert" state regime and

⁴⁵ Aston, Judith, and Stefano Odorico. "I-docs as intervention: the poetics and politics of polyphony." (2018).

⁴⁶ DOI: 10.3366/film.2016.0008

from a parallel with weapons and metals, Pisters draws a system of resistance, once *metal*, following Deleuze and Guattari analogy, is a *matter-movement*, *matter-energy* and *matter-flow* that conduct matters. Artisans metallurgists, "collective bodies" follow and transform energy and matter into objects.

The argument of Pisters has several relevant folds, one of them considering energy and matter of digital archives brought to daylight by these metallurgist gestures. A materialist approach to digital objects itself, once mobile technology today has at its core structure precious metals, that Pisters connects "all films and all other media" to metal, in "a lineage from the earth to our screens". Media materiality has been metallic (Jussi Parikka, 2015)⁴⁷ "from silver for photo chemicals to coltan and many other elements that compose our mobile phones, computers and electronic devices". Such media are "closely connected to the history, ethnography and geopolitics of mining" (Pisters, 2016, p.154).

Screens are made of three Ts metals, also known as conflictual metals: tin, tantalum and tungsten. There is no magic threshold, and digital objects have a physical materiality, very much connected to that metals excavating system and global geopolitics. This fact inscribes metal at the centre of cinema ecology. According to Deleuze and Guattari, metallurgy is "consciousness of matter-flow" and can be a creative or destructive force. Pisters own argument is that political cinema today - "also involves in increasingly intensive ways both the traditional archive and the audiovisual archive in itself as its material-flows"(Pisters, 2016, p. 158). That means filmmakers today use their cameras, but also the available archive of digital images where contemporaneity leaves its traces and consequent symptoms. To return to the question of the constitution of an image of the *peuples* it is necessary to build upon its *non-appearance*, its missing image, within this materialist framework.

To such attempt, as Gilles Deleuze wrote in the last part of the chapter "Cinéma, Corps et Cerveau, Pensée" in "Cinéma 2 - L'Image-Temps" (Editions de Minuit, 1985) about cinema as an art that brings *the masses* as a real subject. The image of the people is an image that continuously misses from a contemporary political cinema perspective, and it might be possible to create it as a bottom-up conquest, a rise up movement, an uprising image. Using Kafka argument, where there is a need to write differently, from minor authorships. To participate in this task, "il faut que l'art cinématographique participe à cette tâche: non pas s'adres-

⁴⁷ Parikka, Jusi, "The Geology of Media", 2015

ser à un peuple supposé, déjà là, mais contribuer à l'invention d'un peuple". (Deleuze, 1985, p. 283). In its paradoxical terms, as Activism or Art, as collective agency or individual emotion, that a space occupies between public and private, and, quoting Comolli, that political filmmaking can take place - "quand il prend pour objet une double impossibilité, celle de faire groupe et celle de ne pas faire groupe" (Deleuze, 1985, p.286).

Is also through a consistency of singularity as an unit of political cinema, and persistence of gathering that a montage of the "people", become presence. A cinema constituted "sur cette fragmentation, cet éclatement". A cinema of remontages of fragments but also of minor units that become themselves *énoncés collectifs* (Deleuze, 1985, p.289). Considering "Third World" cinema a proposal is clear: "par la transe ou la crise, constituer un agencement qui réunisse des parties réelles, pour leur faire produire des énoncés collectifs comme la préfiguration du peuple qui manque"(Deleuze, 1985, p.291). Such is the proposal of this study in a digital environment.

This study developed a genealogy of protest images and an online platform film artefact to constitute a *form juste* of these *énoncés collectifs*, reconfigured from fragments to give place to a political cinema and a possible portrait of that "missing people", disappeared by overexposure to "mass images". On the one hand, is made a genealogy of these images that enables a historiographic mosaic of these concrete videos. Its thread contributes to understanding what practices happened behind those images, what energy and motivations were behind those who filmed and shared them online during the 2011 protests. It is necessary to confine and understand a significant terrain where these gestures happened: Youtube.com.

On the other hand, the construction of a digital artefact that constitutes "other spaces" and political images differently, from dialectical forces of these fragmented videos, is part of experimental practice in this research. An artefact organises, from a critical perspective, a space of potential alternatives both as visual and political practices in an attempt to create, from transversal theory, cinematic and artistic practices, a contribute to digital collective portraits of protest videos, as part of an *image* of contemporary "missing peoples".

2.17 Youtube.com - an every day that matters

Besides being an "audiovisual source" of 21st Century, because of the amount of uploaded videos, but also because of its diversity - political, institutional, social and individual - it is in some way Google's *visual continents*. Nevertheless, Youtube.com has an encounter of specificities that make this visual "terrain", to the aim of this study, rather a convergence of different practices and different materials to focus, to interpret and re-propose. Amid visual culture and archive theory, Youtube.com, from the point of view of this study, is a crossroads of several configurations, a dynamic structure that is an *evolving platform*, once its cultural, political and social impact relies on paradoxical formations of cultural digitality.

That is the heritage of "Californian Ideology"(Barbrook, 1999) where libertarian creativity and liberal business model converge and balance. Jean Burgess and Joshua Green, on a complete overstudy on this subject, define in different spheres the secret of success of this political-cultural-social-technological machine formed by Youtube.com: "The website provided a very simple, integrated surface within which users could upload, publish, and view streaming videos without high levels of technical knowledge, and within the technological constraints of standard browser software and relatively modest bandwidth". ("Youtube, online video and Participatory Culture" (2009, 2018).

The central apparatus of Youtube is set from very early - "no limits on the number of videos users could upload, basic community functions offered, such as the opportunity to link other users as friends, and provided URLs and HTML code that enabled videos to be easily embedded into other websites, a feature that capitalised on a recent introduction of popular accessible blogging technologies" (from the Introduction, 2009), but also some of the key tools of its social and cultural relevance: recommended video links through "related videos", a possibility to link emails and share videos, as well as commentaries, as efficient as a crucial part of the public space project of social media, with additional options to make videos circulate out of the platform to different media realities of personal blogs as "embeddable video players". All these features made this site a powerful media content aggregator.

A symptom of the importance of this gigantic formation was its acquisition by Google Inc. after only a year in business. Its transformation is compatible with the changes in the slogan of the visual repository of pet memories to a powerful *broadcast yourself*.

This change is also part of the rhetorical shifts of Do It Yourself culture, of 2.0 Web and an emergence of the user and digital self mediated expression on public space, as McLuhan media theories happening, convergence culture of "everybody is a media outlet" as Clay Shirky claimed, or Henry Jenkins "Convergence Culture"(2008). Youtube.com profited from a combination of the popularity of user-generated content videos and a global distribution capacity, even to professional media clusters. Its business model is a content aggregator, a platform, not a producer. This is a "meta-business", aligned with other online emergent business models of digital cultural industries, that takes as value and surplus user-generated materials in their diverse formats and global circulation, exploring its commercial value, between personal "creativity and generosity" ("Cognitivity Surplus", Clay Shirky, 2011).

At the end of the circuit, part returns to the creators of content in the platform, but parts stay with the facilitators that become fundamental in the process - the medium became the message. As a mediation system metaphor, the meta nature of Youtube.com also gives it newness and strangeness, once it is an essential visual source in our everyday life that is treated at the same time, as a rare gourmet goody and a garbage bin of leftovers, institutional and underground. Jean Burgess refers to a "field under construction", between amateurs and professionals and where core action is *participatory culture*, as defined by Henry Jenkins.

Another interesting multimedia work that gives an account of this *uncertain terrain* is "The Youtube Reader" (2009), where several authors in its very beginning, under an intuition of Patrick Vonderau, reflected on a set of interrogations for this "place to be" such as Bernard Stiegler, Richard Grusin, William Uricchio, Patricia Lange, Pelle Snickars or Thomas Elsaesser. The conclusion of the book is clear: "The idea of Youtube as a mirror meant a suggestive metaphor. By no means an exhaustive one. The mirror, with its derived categories, is rather a productive concept meant to stimulate associations and to formulate more metaphors" (Fossati, 2009 p.434).

What leads to the question of Nicholas Mirzoeff latest work on visual culture: Today, when we ask "How to see the world?"(2016), or rather - *How do we "see" the "world"?* "We" see it mostly alone, through a screen of a personal digital mobile object, perhaps in a shared communal space, or an intimate one. But the constitution of "our" imagery or imaginary landscape is concatenated within a global gesture of a Youtube.com search. Actuality when seen in a mirror, the world reflects itself in Youtube.com.

Nevertheless, digging into Youtube.com is rather challenging to stabilise results. Videos are continually changing, criteria and logics of search also, and once no stable structure is defined, the chance of reviewing the same videos is not absolute. So, when addressing such mass of images or "material flow" rigid categories of documentation and databases, archival reenactment cannot be very useful, once it is not possible also to scrutinise a whole sample. A list of videos can be marked as belonging to a playlist preference, but in this kind of universe is difficult to define a boundary, once there is always another video linked with, and another. Also, terms of use and regulations have changed during this research process and will continue, once this is a commercial end platform, property of a private multinational corporation.

This study addresses some questions of this mega-machine, as an unstable and open model, with an analogy of a vacant lot, a piece of land full of rubble and at the same time, perhaps some precious small stones. A visual district without an accessible map, a database without a visible architectural structure, a library with no shelves or librarian, but a shared vacant lot, where each user makes its own path with some hints or suggestions, with saved preferences and following channels.

2.18 Survival of the digital "fireflies", the retrieval of the "poor image"

In Agnès Varda's documentary "Les Glaneurs et la Glaneuse"(1999), a reflection upon the nature of recycling and recovering practices of the waste in society, as questioning on quotidian use of digital video images, is made⁴⁸. The film opens a threshold in this study with a thought on the relevance of modes of use of vernacular video images. A gesture inspired by those in this work is proposed to Youtube.com terrain.

George Didi-Huberman wrote about an "illuminating figure", in "Survivance des Lucioles" (2009), where the author proposes a methodological gesture to bring an image firefly of significances as a constellation of traces. The **fireflies** concept, initiate a discussion on its survival rather than its disappearance and is a development of Piero Paolo Pasolini's article also known as the "article of the Fireflies", written in February 1975, present in the compilation "Corsaire Writings"(1975). An article published in Corriere Della Sera under the title,

⁴⁸. The plan where the video camera was on became a new kind of image in itself. The "involuntary embodied travelling" that Varda did not reject but rather embraced in the montage and the film.

"*The Vacuum of Power in Italy*", where a discontent Pasolini discussed in post-war decades, a people's apathy.

The idea of George Didi-Huberman in "*La Survivance des Lucioles*" starts with this poetic ecological image from Pasolini's reflection. However, instead of continuing through a path of disappearance, Didi-Huberman essays a path of *survival* for - "le danse des lucioles, ce moment de grâce qui résiste au monde de la terreur, est la chose la plus fugace, la plus fragile qui soit".(Didi-Huberman, 2009, p.21). Also, a way to "organise the pessimism" in Benjaminian terms. A philosophical, political and ecological action as proposed, resonates Agnès Varda film. This argument organises a survival, following Didi-Huberman rationale, transporting a contemporary hypothesis that *digital visual fireflies are not disappearing either*; they are perhaps invisible. In this case, behind loads of online links or under layers of digital signals, lost in screen brilliance somewhere in Youtube.com. A close approach to a theory of survivals, a theory of symptoms, recalling Aby Warburg's visual projects, influent in Didi-Huberman.

Fireflies as images can constitute a political corpus, once they exist beyond "mass image" hypothesis. The possibility of its survival resides in a space - "fût-il interstitiel, intermittent, nomade, improbablement situé - des ouvertures, des possibles, des lueurs, des malgré tout"(Didi-Huberman, 2012, p.36). For Didi-Huberman, that poses such question as crucial, an answer can not be a total image, but instead "des signaux, des singularités".

To his questions: "Mais que deviennent aujourd'hui les signaux lumineux évoqués par Pasolini (...)? Quelles en sont les chances d'apparition ou les zones d'effacement, les puissances ou les fragilités? À quelle part de la réalité - le contraire d'un tout -l'image des lucioles peut-elle s'adresser aujourd'hui? (Didi-Huberman, 2012, p.36). To address these images in contemporaneity, Youtube.com should be considered part of the landscape where they reside, becoming terrain of visual and invisible singularities.

To define these images, this research drafts on the instant classic text of Hito Steyerl "*In defense of the poor image*"(2009). The poor image, "the errant image", or a "ghost of an image", "an itinerant image distributed for free", constituting a class apart "A lumpen proletarian in the class society of appearances, ranked and valued according to its resolution"⁴⁹. An

⁴⁹ This text is itself a transversal reference to this study, in several layers, since the notion of precarious until a bottom-up constitution of poor images. <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/>. Last accessed in March 2020.

image that in digital times, wanders in the virtual space around, no more "liberated from the vaults of cinemas and archives and thrust into digital uncertainty" wanders to the point of becoming a ghost, or by its intermittence, as fireflies, a symptom - likely to be retrieved and recreated from vacant lot of "youtube.com"⁵⁰ and reenacted differently or into other value system community.

2.19 Habitual New Media, Vernacular Videos

On this context, this research proposes to cross a conception as that of fireflies as "poor digital images", with Wendy Hui Kyong Chun conceptions in "Updating to remain the same - Habitual New Media" (MIT Press, 2016). Here the author arguments that a focus of analysis on media users habits could, instead of running after the newest tech-paradigm, turn to habitual media practices that are embodied in everyday life, that make significant changes in individual habits and also change its collective configurations:

"Our media matter the most when they seem not to matter at all, that is, when they have moved from the new to the habitual. Search engines are hardly new or exciting, but they have become the default mode of knowledge acquisition. Smartphones no longer amaze, but they increasingly structure and monitor the lives of their so-called owners."(from the Introduction).

The "user that becomes as machine" and thus users, as a group, an assemblage of machines. The proposal in Chun's text is to deconstruct positing of habits as additive accumulations, once "It means inhabiting and discovering how our habits collect, rather than divide, us" (Chun, 2016, p.172). A disruptive analysis from this author gets away from a quest for progress trends, creating resistance to technology programmed obsolescence regime and instead, requires an attachment to quotidian habits and common digital objects in everyday lives.

As an example, filmmaker and visual artist, Natalie Bookchin, in Wendy Chun's words, works within an encounter of mass public images and individual subjectivities and from her works emerges an idea of "*found collectivities*" as Jamie Barion theoretical conceptions in "Archive Effect" (2014). Bookchin's work, "Mass and Ornament"(2009), "Testament"

⁵⁰ On the relations of "poor image" concepts and digital resolution, check the last issue of NECSUS Journal, "Resolution", the editorial article by Francesco Casetti and Antonio Somaini: "Resolution: Digital Materialities, Thresholds of Visibility". <https://necsus-ejms.org/resolution-digital-materialities-thresholds-of-visibility/> where the authors develop this argument on high resolution in digital image - last accessed in March 2020

or "Layed Off", where an individual-collective chorus of vlog images make themselves visible through talking about unemployment, crisis, taking medication - collective themes from individual fragments. This artist and filmmaker inspired this study to dive into vernacular uses of video, and her original presence in both artistic and academic fields make her a presence in both reflections. Working on following traces, like in Pasolini's example, from jargon to tattoos, that can identify and constitute specific underground or minor communities and make it possible to portray them collectively. In Bookchin's case, recollecting public-private images orchestrating them in installations and montage films as participatory practices.

"What if?" an alternative and independent video-sharing platform existed, with a performative structure as contemporary installations and a set of tailored tools of montage from political cinema grammar, to aggregate these fragmented constellations? Could this be a place to assemble by each individual their footage from protest events and create an untimely collective film? Could this raise a *lumpenproletariat* of 21st-century images collective? An uprising of precarious images as collective portraits?

2.20 - Platform Film | Montage Communities

One relevant question remains in the intersections between technology, politics and its aesthetics: how does collectivisation appear? A set of various theories of gathering collective energy into a collective corpus appear. What modes of production constitute such a collective entity? How is formed a "coming community?". Several theoretical hypotheses have been formulated in different authors and had gained a resurgence contemporarily. Giorgio Agamben "Coming Community"(1990), Maurice Blanchot "La communauté inavouable"(1983) or Jean Luc-Nancy's "La communauté désœuvrée"(1986) are examples of "communal theory". Also "La République à venir" (2011) gather some texts by George Didi-Huberman or Marie José Mondzain, among others about community and image. Collective clusters theories that present in this research go from *concatenated machines* of Gerald Raunig, *performative assemblages* theories by Judith Butler and *vernacular communities* idealised by Ivan Illich (1982), and reinterpreted by Peter Snowden (2016).

It is the shape of the **platform**, as *common ground* that is a core structure of this research and this artistic artefact. To create a structure of interaction of mutual relations and sy-

necdochical significance, two concepts gathered. The first is the *platform*, as an arena of accumulations and traces, entrances and sharings, with no fixed ideology around it, only a mesh of theatrical metaphors as "theatrical machines" in Gerald Raunig "A thousand machines" (Raunig, 2007).

The platform in its emptiness is also a promise of openness, also evolving as an important political asset : "A computing platform or digital platform is the environment in which a piece of software is executed. It may be the hardware or the operating system (OS), even a web browser and associated application programming interfaces, or other underlying software, as long as the program code is executed with it. Computing platforms have different abstraction levels, including computer architecture, an OS, or runtime libraries. A computing platform is a stage on which computer programs can run" - Wikipedia definition of platform.⁵¹

Secondly, the concept of **montage** where cinematic language creates significance through processes of cutting, splitting, juxtaposing, recomposing, slowing or accelerating. Also, adding layers of sensuous experience, like colours, sounds, texts or whatever possibilities. Cinema is reloaded as a pioneer of remediated media, multimedia prototype, convergence language, as seen in Lev Manovich (Manovich, 2001) or Bolter and Grusin (2000). Georges Didi-Huberman conceives his theoretical articulation in a montage, montage dialectics. A tension of "images-thoughts" present in each jump, each leap, each paragraph where the reversal, the suture is of equal importance. In this research an artefact montage has several layers: it is the representational mode of the platform, an interface visuality, an editing table and its interaction, but also an inscription and creational structure to collective activist action.

As Hito Steyerl envisions in "The articulation of the protest" (2002)⁵², "Every articulation is a montage of various elements - voices, images, colours, passions or dogmas - within a certain period and with a certain expanse in space. The significance of the articulated moments depends on this. (...) So how is protest articulated?". Steyerl, in this text, asks for the possibility of political montage as an articulation of protest, notions of montage work as structures of protest itself. "Which montage between two images/elements could be imagined, that would result in something different between and outside these two, which would not

⁵¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computing_platform

⁵² <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0303/steyerl/en>

represent a compromise, but would instead belong to a different order - roughly the way someone might tenaciously pound two dull stones together to create a spark in the darkness? Whether this spark, which one could also call the spark of the political, can be created at all is a question of this articulation.”(Steyerl, 2002)

A long path of theoretical questionings has been presented in this first section. The goal of this traject pretends not only to raise topics of literature review but also to draft an arch of interrogations and declinations that shapes a horizon of theoretical possibilities, that in a way, constitute this research singular journey answer.

3. ON METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Practice-Based Research - a digital artefact between theory and practice

The present chapter focus on the methods used in this research. It also is a set of contributes from these experiences, about methodology and the ways theory and practice can embody mutually in Practice-Based Doctoral research. Once it is partially a written dissertation and partially a digital artefact, it is relevant to clarify a processual relation between these two different paths and results. On the one hand, theoretical research and a written form process, and on the other, a creative composition entail a dialogue within the theory and a different new form. Relations between research materials shape a theoretical debate from its composite. Hence a composite is itself structured around a set of theories. Into such reflection, elements to present are materials and techniques, or in other words, its modes of production.

This research followed Linda Candy, Ernest Edmonds and the Creative Cognition Studios group studies to guide a journey with a "hands-on" approach. They are seeded in the University of Technology of Sydney, which has been a close reading, with their insightful articles, examples and experience, fostering several PhD trajects in artistic practice-based research, specifically in areas like design, creative arts and new media⁵³. One relevant claim that matches this research goal is defined as by Candy and Edmonds as - "two types of frameworks underpin and facilitate the practice-based research process: one is practitioner-determined and research-led whilst the other is organisational, comprising funded research and doctoral programs."⁵⁴ (Candy,2010) stressing a perspective where outcomes of creative practice are insightful for new knowledge.

This is a differential skill in New Media and Digital Technologies doctoral programs, where a quest for innovation and prototyping is part of the specific characteristics of this kind of research projects. It sediments itself as a concept and process of creating artefacts, central in "practice-based knowledge generation". An experience of this kind of practice-based rese-

⁵³ Candy, Linda, and Ernest Edmonds. "Practice-based research in the creative arts: Foundations and futures from the front line." *Leonardo* 51.1 (2018): 63-69 ; Candy, Linda. "Practice-based research: A guide." *CCS Report* 1 (2006): 1-19.; Edmonds, Ernest, and Linda Candy. "Creativity, art practice, and knowledge." *Communications of the ACM* 45.10 (2002): 91-95.;

⁵⁴ Candy, Linda, and Ernest Edmonds. "The role of the artefact and frameworks for practice-based research." *The Routledge companion to research in the arts*. Routledge, New York, USA(2010): 120-136.

arch has been fomented in some academic clusters like the UK, USA and Australia, with crescent interest in Arts, Design and New Media programs. These two authors refer mutual referentiality to artefacts and written theory or dissertation: “Practice-based art research can be about the creation of new apprehensions, but any art object made as part of that research does not, by itself, embody knowledge.” It is also essential, from the perspective of the practitioner, a compromise with academic research, methods and written theory as outputs, an artistic mode of production that “systematically explores and reflects upon alternative paths, processes, structures and materials as an integral part of his or her practice.”

Such options within a creative process with this academic layer pursuits practitioners who entail their work from questioning and theoretical search for the materialisation of their interrogations in their praxis, “in a way that incorporates formalised research by defining problems, methods and outcomes and, at the same time, produce artefacts that embody the ideas and processes.” Some practitioners working within PhD programs are in areas as New Media and Digital Arts - “These artists are at the forefront of an interdisciplinary movement in which visual and sound artworks, installations and performances are enabling audiences to participate in interactive experiences.” (Candy, 2010).

As both authors underline, practice and theory tensions in this research area have specific contours, are a practice of “making in systems”, defined - “in terms of moving ‘beyond disciplinary boundaries and into areas of inquiry that interact and intersect and require new ways to conceptualise forms and structures” (Sullivan, 2005 in Candy and Edmonds, 2006).

This is a relevant methodological imprint to these processes, once moving beyond discipline boundaries, aggregating and sedimenting materials and theories, through work on the architecture and the needs of such artefact. These authors describe “some general features of the way practitioners undertake their research and, in particular, how they develop conceptual frameworks that inform and guide the making and evaluation of artefacts”, which assumes a central role in the research process. All the texts, problems and solutions derive in some concrete feature on the prototype. “Through making artefacts, practitioners were able to generate questions and also to explore the answers to those questions through further making”.

Within this context, research needs to be “disseminated”, “original” and “contextualised”, which puts an effort on written dissertations, like commentary and theoretical evidence

of process. It is relevant to stress the experimental modes of working within this type of research and the crossing boundaries that it involves. “Perhaps the key characteristic required is that the practice is fundamentally exploratory, involving innovation and risk in ways that are familiar to researchers in the broader community”.

Another input, from this reference, is to stress a necessity to define *frameworks in practice-based research*, once “all research is conducted within a context of convention and tradition”, in practice-based research there exist wider variations and perspectives. Frameworks for “practice-based research comprises a conceptual structure that is used to influence practice, inform theory and, in particular, shape validation or evaluation” (Edmonds and Candy, 2010). In this research context, frameworks are closely intertwined with the methods used and developed, impacting it.

Frameworks identified and used in this research, as those described by these authors are “criteria for guiding the design of a new artefact or installation;” but also fundamental research “questions expressed as working hypotheses, to be explored using theoretical knowledge.” This structure has been strategic in this research once its developments were possible from a combination, both of material and abstract contaminations. A quest for its suitable forms and techniques in the field of research, Digital Media, within its audiovisual and multimedia confinements, or modes of production, both deeply embodied in practice and theory, were proposed with a focus on a transversal approach

. An evaluation of such works comprises a tailored framework, created through a double object, the dissertation and the artefact. Implicit processes of such journeys are named *trajectories of practice and research*, comprising practice, theory and evaluation. These trajectories are not linear, with different chronologies for relations between practice, theory and frameworks of evaluation. It is from its development that hypothesis for experimental practices or theories in action get in contact and germinate through specific guidelines of theoretical knowledge and compared practice, that will also provide criteria for evaluation.

As James Elkins (2005) defined, a Practice-Based PhD dissertation, is seen “as something that can inform art practice, be equal to artwork, or even be the artwork”. Standard programs for Practice-Based PhDs can be “portfolio with written commentary” or “joint portfolio and dissertation” which include “innovative, creative work with an explanation” and a second type that “is partly a conventional thesis but includes, as an essential element, a crea-

tive work”. This study follows the last type of strategy, entailing some major acknowledgements of these authors in its research processes, practices and frameworks, from theory to practice.

3.2 “Aesthetics of Resistance” - Researching strategies of aesthetic and epistemic disobedience and resistance

After defining the horizons of research design, from the practice-based research literature, is introduced a critical perspective on politics and modes of production. The question of artistic research today has in Hito Steyerl “Aesthetics of Resistance - Artistic Research as Discipline and Conflict” (2010) a critical reading. To Steyerl, artistic research, although constrained between definition and identity “*defined as undefined*”, or as constant unreachable flow, has however been in the centre of two poles, appropriation of artistic practice as an academic discipline, and its criticism as “complicit within new modes of production of cognitive capitalism: commodified education, creative and affective industries (...)”(Steyerl, 2010). Nevertheless, a normative process of incorporation of artistic research in academia is a consensual fact by now.

Artistic research has been, in a section of the author’s argument, partly modulated into an academic discipline, in one hand, to validate artistic work in academic terms, as degrees and results, but also as research practices and innovative theories. “There are discussions about curriculum, degrees, methods, practical application, pedagogy”. It is, however, from a definition of *discipline* that the text enriches a concept as method and methodology itself. To Steyerl, it is central a notion of discipline where its dialectical potential resides and resists. What to do within such constraints?

“A discipline is, of course, disciplinarian; it normalises, generalises and regulates; (...) trains people to function in an environment of symbolic labour, permanent design and streamlined creativity.” However, in its opposite resides opposite strength, “what is a discipline apart from all this?” and an answer “A discipline may be oppressive, but this is also why it points to the issue it keeps under control.” As a possible terrain to organise conflict, discipline: “It is a practice to channel and exploit its energies and to incorporate them into the powers that be”(Steyerl,2010).

A similar hypothesis is explored on a methodology settlement in this research. Cross interrogations appear, as analysed by Steyerl, in a framework of her piece, “*The Building*” - related to the building process of Academy of the Arts in Linz - “(...) where is the conflict, or rather what are the extensive sets of conflicts underlying this new academic discipline? Who is currently building its walls, using which materials, produced by whom? Who are the builders of the discipline, and where are their traces?” (Steyerl, 2010).

One relevant aspect of this context is an inscription of these practices in a “contemporary metropolitan art academies”, in Humanities university environment, that nowadays also projects technological and artistic institutions to respond to formations of the knowledge society and tech-cognitive capitalism with creative strategies. As Steyerl describes, these places of creation are inhabited by “metropolitan artists acting as ethnographers, sociologists, product or social designers. It gives the impression of being an asset of technologically and conceptually advanced First World capitalism, trying to upgrade its population to function in a knowledge economy efficiently, and as a by-product, casually surveying the rest of the world as well.” (Steyerl, 2010).

Examples of the twenties of the 20th-century Russian avant-garde are a reference that took sciences as a model, as Steyerl describes, when a “scientific art” practices from Soviet authors like Vertov, Tretjakov, Popova, Rodchenko, conducted close investigations between art and truth and were part of epistemological processes, dealing creatively with objectivity and facts, like Vertovian *kino-eye*, for example. This argument situates those years as a genesis of a kind of dialectics of art and science. “Fact comes from *facere*, to make or to do.”

Nevertheless, there is identified as a resistance movement to make a counter-movement in History. To argue for a Benjaminian historical practice against the grain, and a resistant one, Steyerl evokes her heroes, like Peter Weiss and his “Aesthetic of Resistance” (1975) as a genealogy of “aesthetic research, which is related to the history of emancipatory struggles throughout the 20th century”. However, also exiled Bertolt Brecht’s writings or Tretjakov documentary practices - another recurrence in her theory - among others offer a set of “resistance” artists, historians and intellectuals of the 20th century. Such a position is adopted by Steyerl herself in her work. Steyerl takes the novel in the context of left-wing intellectuals as an example of raising awareness, the awakening of “general intellect”. What is consonant

with a tradition that Hal Foster also depicts in “Bad New Days”(2015) and to which McKenzie Wark gives a new expression in “General Intellects” (2017).

Next questions concern methodologies to adapt the concept of essay film⁵⁵, as a digital artefact, embodied of mutual theory and visual materiality. The essay film or film essay configuration, “capable of visualising theoretical ideas” has been, through a lineage of filmmakers and authors like Harun Farocki, Jean-Luc Godard, Chris Marker, Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucci, for example, a continued answer to the text's question: “How does one show abstractions, how does one visualise the immaterial of new ideas, theories?” intertwining a thread of concepts with concrete images and sounds. Such is a formal proposal to transport to the digital field.

Hito Steyerl develops her argument from a necessity of creation of art objects that gather research and artistic practice, essays in artistic forms. To sustain this, examples of political anti-colonial cinema experiences like “Les Statues Meurent Aussi” of Chris Marker and Alain Resnais are part of Steyerl constellation.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the next strategies that Steyerl identify are relevant as methodologies and modes of production to model design to this research:

“Other methods of artistic research include situationist derive and workers inquiries, constructivist montage, cut-ups, biomechanics, oral History, deconstructive or surrealist anthropology, the diffusion of counter-information as well as aesthetic journalism. Some of these methods are more easily absorbed into the art mainstream than others. Especially strongly dematerialised practices with referred modernist features are quickly absorbed into information capitalism because they are compressed, quick to absorb and easily transmitted.” (Steyerl, 2010)

To work in a Digital Media culture environment has concrete possibilities of being absorbed into “information capitalism”, but a horizon of expanded bottom-up collective History made of Youtube videos from global landscapes is a hypothesis worth of effort. One question is how to shape a method that is, at the same time sketched from this conceptual “aesthetic of resistance” tradition in a moment of emerging digital capitalism, and drafts a prototype of independent media collective production. Or rather how to create an expanded

⁵⁵ Steyerl references come from Hans Richter and Theodor Adorno, in his seminal text “Essay as Form”(1954)

⁵⁶ Or Third Cinema's Manifesto, by Solanas and Espinosa, another reference of Steyerl, for example in “In defence of Poor Image” (2009).

platform film that would become an alternative digital template, endorsing its origins of social movements activist discourse? How to, in a close reading of Walter Benjamin's "The Author as Producer" text, within political terms of contemporary "*digitalness*", what "techniques" suit this artistic and theoretical "aesthetic resistance" settlement?

The focus chosen here, as Steyerl text defines, are power structures and struggles and its cinematographic mastery in documentary practices, along a History of resistance and emancipation to punctuate this transversal itinerary - an argument close to Gerald Raunig "Art and Activism in Long Twentieth Century"(2007) - "It is no coincidence that many of the practices mentioned here have been dealing with classical problems of documentary representation from very different perspectives: its function as power/knowledge, its epistemological problems, its relation to reality and the challenge of creating a new one. Documentary styles and forms have forever grappled with the rough mix of rationality and creativity, between subjectivity and objectivity, between the power of creation and the power of conservation". These concerns come as central to this research, a core connection within an encounter of real(s), its experience(s) and its form(s). Political documentary, in its broad History, has also been trying to answer to Godard's famous formulation: "Quoi faire?".

A correct form to such encounter of a real and its aesthetics. And back to Steyerl - "It is no coincidence either that many of the historical methods of artistic research are tied to social or revolutionary movements, or to moments of crisis and reform. In this perspective, the outline of a global network of struggles is revealed, which spans almost the whole 20th century, which is transversal, relational, and emancipatory"(Steyerl, 2010).

Thus, how to translate to digital media practice, from a perspective of conflict within its technological structure, in Steyerl's definition of documentary, what Walter Benjamin defined as "techniques" of political art? How to recreate an appropriation of online video platform contents, according to those - "strategies of epistemic disobedience"? An answer that suits - "A power/knowledge/art, which reduced whole populations to objects of knowledge, domination and representation, had to be countered not only by social struggle and revolts but also by epistemological and aesthetic innovation"(Steyerl, 2010).

A political art proposition from a perspective of conflicts in the 21-st century also has to be drafted from its singularity, in the sense of confronting and facing its moment in time and History, and in that sense, Peter Weibel's "artivism" notion defines a conceptual encoun-

ter. Despite that, there is a contextualisation of some historical aesthetic strategies, brought into account to digital culture context and analysis, to create a kind of “re-montage effect” of a present. Reloading some of these tools, strategies and effects not from art field to art field - but in a dialogue, sometimes a monologue, with mainstream visual content field production, like online video sharing platforms as Youtube.com is the primary goal.

A prototype proposes itself as an assemblage aligned with figures like concepts of “*typage*”, to follow examples of Sergei Eisenstein or August Sander.⁵⁷, a humanist “*typage*”, where each individual image contains “its own strength and a collective bond”, like Walter Benjamin or George Didi-Huberman wrote about documentarist photography. Inscribed in the “documentary tradition” Didi-Huberman remembers Walter Benjamin - “*sur la reproductibilité technique - “les photographies commencent à devenir des pièces de conviction pour le procès de l’histoire. C’est en cela que réside leur secrète signification politique [et ainsi elles] ne se prêtent plus à un regard détaché. Elles inquiètent celui qui les regarde”*. To Didi-Huberman this is the “le gai savoir inquiet”, or “une communauté de corps vivants et souffrants que l’on voit quelquefois, littéralement, ployer sous le fardeau du monde social” - (in “Atlas ou le Gai Savoir Inquiet, L’Oeil de L’Histoire, 3”, p.174).

What is a common language, if not a continuous translatable existence?

Hito Steyerl contributes with a definition of the emancipation of artistic strategies and modes of production, from disciplinary entanglements: “While specific methods generate a shared terrain of knowledge – which is consequently pervaded by power structures – singular methods follow their own logic. While this may avoid the replication of existing structures of power/knowledge, it also creates the problem of the proliferation of parallel universes, which each speak their own, untranslatable language. Practices of artistic research usually partake in both registers, the singular as well as the specific; they speak several languages at once”(Steyerl, 2010).

These practices embody as methodology the development of the artefact. Questioning modes of production is central in this research, and consequent questioning of Digital Media Studies as a discipline, its normative processes and its possible *détournement* has a methodological relevance also. To challenge some of these establishments in Digital Media, some fi-

⁵⁷These imaginaries are present in “Peuples Exposés, Peuples Figurants”, where August Sand documentary photographic project of german workers, destroyed by the nazis is remembers. Also Serguei Eisenstein research of characters by their image. See Dana Polan article, “Eisenstein as Theorist” (1977) Polan, Dana B. "Eisenstein as a theorist." *Cinema Journal* 17.1 (1977): 14-29.

gures of the digital emerges. McKenzie Wark writes in his Introduction to “Beach Beneath the Street” (Verso, 2015), remembering Guy Debord - “spent a lot of time working on how to remember situations, how to document them and keep them in a way that could ignite future possibilities.”⁵⁸ Although “much of the literature on Situationists seems designed to be disabling, to prevent any real creative use of this body of work for critical practices in the twenty-first century” (from the Introduction). To search within such modes of production, and against the grain, as situationists practices, in computing platforms, interaction architecture, and web design, is essayed here as to have a non accommodated layout, or a disruptive interaction, installing an *unease* of performative proposals and alternative modes of use.

This line of thought proposes an introduction of the logic of *détournement* in the design of interaction and user experience, re-aligning an opening discourse on the artefact homepage, or the recuperation of different colour systems of affection as image filters, that reconnect to historical references like primitive cinema, moving away from a flood of digitised effects and social media image filters. The practice-based artistic prototype at the basis of this research exposes in its structures also its conflictual settlement. Rather than an artefact of mimetization, of reproduction of imageries or theoretical statements, it proposes a resultant *détournement* or re-montage of designing and “concatenating” contemporary disciplines within Digital Media field. Along with these figures, there is another that is a very fertile one, that of the *hacker*, entirely arisen from digital culture.

3.3 Hacker Class & General Intellectuals - Critical and Creative fuel for Digital Media

On the Introduction to his “General Intellectuals - Twenty-One Thinkers for the Twenty-First Century” (Verso Books, 2017) McKenzie Wark describes a situation where classic “intellectuals” have disappeared from a mass printing culture, where their work made them subsist, to the current “situation”, where these intellectual labourers pay job usually situates in the University. Wark proposes a notion as “General Intellectuals”, a pluralisation of Marx’s “Fragment on Machines”, the concept of *general intellect*, that - “might be Marx groping for a way to think the role of something like intellectual labour in the production process”. Ne-

⁵⁸ Wark, McKenzie. *The beach beneath the street: The everyday life and glorious times of the Situationist International*. Verso Books, 2015. This work is a thorough account of Situationist practice itself. Hence it deconstructs Debord preponderance in historical perspectives of the group and entails almost a spatial ethno-historiography of the collective.

vertheless, an absorption of intellectual labour in the production process, “a system which, in a much more refined way, slots them into processes of extracting value from their work”(Wark, 2017). Moreover, their place in this hybrid factory is University - “Academic labour has to work within systems of management that are derivative of other kinds of management of intellectual labour. It is becoming quantified and stratified”.

Wark term of “general intellects”, although derivative from Marx, has a specific meaning “people who are mostly employed as academics, (...) but who try to address more general problems about the state of the world today”, being part of General Intellect, in “that they are workers (whose work is commodified)”, but also try to think and act against commodification system. Thus, Wark relates this state of things with information technology apparatus and extreme changes in *forces of production* and *energy* conditions that explore the diffusion of factory conceptions. “The science itself would become not just a force of production, but in its own right a kind of industrial system, and one that works quite differently to the factory system.”(Wark, 2017) This system unit is quantified labour time, but a relevant margin is working now on *nonstandard* things.

“Hackers create the possibility of new things entering the world. Not always great things or even good things, but new things. In art, in science, in philosophy and culture, in any production of knowledge where data can be gathered, where information can be extracted from it, and where, in that information new possibilities for the world produced, there are hackers hacking the new out of the old. While we create these new worlds, we do not possess them. That which we create is mortgaged to others, and to the interests of others, to states and corporations who monopolise the means for making worlds we alone discover.

We do not own what we produce—it owns us.”

Mckenzie Wark “The Hacker Manifesto”

(Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004, p.70)

“Hacker Class”, in Mckenzie Wark “The Hacker Manifesto” (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), embodies - “the rise of intellectual property as a mutation in the private property form, that encloses the commons of information and spawns whole new categories of potential commodities”(p.70). Furthermore, this system of accumulation is possi-

ble through a concerted action of energy, materials and information. The *hacker*, defined by Wark “(...) touches the virtual—and transforms the actual.”, meaning that the act of hack “must be imbued with innovation, style and technical virtuosity” (Wark, 2004, p.71). Wark stresses a relation between “creative production in a vectorial world” with an emergence of the *hacker* in areas as computing engineer and coding. Being part of a resistance and awareness movement, “the hacker ethic has come up against the forces of commodified education and communication”, within what the author believes as a “struggle for cultural change”, “freeing the hacker from its particulars, understanding its abstraction”, as a movement, or collective concept.

Hackers, as liberating figures, although controversial, keep rhetoric of digital culture as diverse, creative and anti-systemic alive. Along with utopianism, a libertarian discourse of sixties counter-culture were Beat Generation, and the World Wide Web took place, as “Californian Ideology” took notice. Aligned with artistic counter-culture movements and intellectual scene “in a long tradition of left art”, artists and thinkers are aligned under a theoretical umbrella of Walter Benjamin's or Bertolt Brecht's works as Hal Foster refers in “Bad New Days” (Verso Books, 2015). Hacker class, as Wark situates, between intellectual and political commitment to knowledge and freedom, works in and out the system, in the fringes of *Fabbrica Diffusa*, with the necessary disobedience to question and to create a wave of introspective, reflexive and final exposure of nodes of conflict, to affront contemporary systems and to develop different creative solutions. This class cooperation could jeopardise all information commodification that a “ruling class” power could extract.

Wark argues that Marx projections did not integrate information as an element of the system, as part of the process, nor a need for cooperation from plural general intellects - “General intellects might have to figure out together how all of the particular domains in which we work or study, from politics to culture to science to technology, are all at one and the same time part of the problem and part of any possible solution”(Wark, 2017). From an expanded analysis of such system, a perspective on *techné* is crucial. Rather as information, part as “questions about the social, the historical, the political and the cultural and so on”, but also that “one can no longer treat social phenomena as if there was a stable background of natural phenomena that can be bracketed off and ignored”. At this point, a methodology is transversal: “One task for general intellects might be to imagine a kind of common hacker class inte-

rest among those whose efforts end up being commodified as some sort of intellectual property: artists, scientists, engineers, even humanist and social science academics.”(Wark, 2017).

At this point, a consideration on modes of production of academic research in a digital context can be useful. It should put into context, once materials and methods around this research and artefact also emerge from fields of political art and cinema, aligned with a genealogy and epistemology of resistance. Critical questioning of the role of University in digital culture context and intellectual labour under cognitive capitalism is addressed here as part of a debate around modes of production in academia in a general way, but in Digital Media field, where critical awareness to these themes should consider some other related thoughts. There is, consequently, a focus on *digital*, as part of these global systems, both apparent in “digital objects” as in the emergence of “digital subjects.”⁵⁹

Authors, like Italian theorists Antonio Negri or Paolo Virno, developed concepts around these debates, as the notion of *Fabbrica Diffusa*. An idea that the factory, as a Marxist workplace, no longer exists confined in a physical space. Instead, it is more a diffuse effect on society in general, all over the place, from leisure activities to virtual network offices and so on.⁶⁰ As Tiziana Terranova contextualises - “University as part of the ‘diffuse factory’ as described in Autonomist work. Their description of a shift from a society where production takes place predominantly in the closed site of the factory to one where it is the whole of society that is turned into a factory – a productive site – is still very fitting politically”(Terranova, 2004).

The role of University, permeated by the pervasive neoliberal regime, has been under pressure. In one hand, by the changes and different metrics and quantification of its goals. On the other, some of its own scholars that question this state of things. In Metamute.org, in the article “Recomposing the University.”⁶¹ Tiziana Terranova and Marc Busquet dialogue from their perspective, on how university system works and what to do within it, “Far from being

⁵⁹ This is a reference to Negri, Antonio text: "The appropriation of fixed capital: A metaphor?" (2019): 205-214., in David Fuchs edition “Digital Objects, Digital Subjects”, 2019 - David Chandler and Christian Fuchs, eds. 2019. *Digital Objects, Digital Subjects: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Capitalism, Labour and Politics in the Age of Big Data*. London: University of Westminster Press. last accessed March 2020

⁶⁰One significant achievement on communication engineers and a pioneer of the World Wide Web development is the “mother of all demos” by Doug Engelbart, where an experience of sending the first email and remotely communicating was a landmark of a new era of teleworking.

⁶¹ <https://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/recomposing-university> last accessed April 2020

a simple question of domination, (...) the conditions of ‘mass intellectuality’ – also shared by many knowledge workers elsewhere in the ‘social factory’ – create enormous scope for new alliances and forms of resistance”(Terranova, 2004). Main contributions from this debate, to a methodology with a political configuration, happens from the emergence of a class conscience configuration, from an idea of “‘mass intellectuality’ or even networked intelligence (an abstract quality of social labour-power as it becomes increasingly informational and communicative)”(Terranova, 2004).

What role to University spaces and critical reflexivity when dealing with debates in Media Studies and Digital Media, in particular? Once a model like *Fabbrica Diffusa* is networked and informational dependent, what role to these academic fields for developing theory and critical thought around this debate? Addressing political questions of the modes of production digital artefact, this research points as part of a methodology, some considerations on these positions: A *Fabbrica Diffusa* concept within academic system develops as part of an analysis on academic results itself, in particular in Media Studies and Digital Media. Hence a critical thought in this area has an enlarged impact in *Fabbrica Diffusa* apparatus itself, once a digital and informational networked model is structural to the construction of “mass intellectuality” and its *modus operandi*. As Terranova proposes, there are ways to work within this awareness: “Once we see that the campus is seamlessly part of the whole (social and global) factory floor – in this sense an unprivileged location in a vast horizontal plane – it becomes an opportunity for the self-organisation of labour and (...) reorganising the social relations of re/production”(Terranova, 2004).

Emergent class configurations are possibilities to appear in the system, but also “self-organisation of labour, different alliances and forms of resistance”. The example of transition from mass worker to mass intellectuality, and the role of University in this change, is a line of thought to develop in this debate. As mass workers did not recognise union movement traditions and precipitated a “reinvention of politics”, can emergent classes of “mass intellectuality” within academia, and in the particular field of Media Studies and Digital Media, create critical thinking and strategies of opposing commodified intellectual labour?

How can class recomposition occur in these fields? To Terranova “An implication is that class is not simply about the reproduction of dialectical domination, but it is also endowed with its own historicity – a kind of dynamic potential, a surplus of value that antago-

nistically produces new forms of life and demands new modes of political and cultural expression.”(Terranova, 2004) Even if *Fabbrica Diffusa* is part of a cognitive capitalism strategy, a “*desire of capital*”, can this also be an opportunity to a “recomposition of the class dynamics- a new production of values and forms of life which produce the basis for the reinvention of politics”? “Class conscience” of “mass intellectuality” and its strength in the contemporary social factory is a configuration, not only on a perspective of dominance, “but to understand the shifting mode of class composition, its dynamics and the values that it produces (taking into account, for example, the heterogeneous axes of subjectivation)”(Terranova, 2004).

Terranova here refers to ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, for example, resonating strategies like “decolonise the academy” movement. Focus, theoretical with methodological consequences, as Terranova refers, is a transition, a shift from transcendental dialects to an immanent one, “The emphasis is more on the heterogeneous production of subjectivity, which takes place at the level of material connections (crucially including desiring and technical machines, from the assembly line to media and computer networks)”(Terranova, 2004).

The creation of subjectivity in this research has two axes: computer networks, media practices and theories, aesthetic affections and significance, that cinema and image production can create. Despite this, it is in a realm of digital culture and digital image, that configurations of desire and technological machines emerge, and it is within its landscapes, that a possible contribution to *class conscience* strategy to a *mass intellectuality* can emerge. As Marc Bousquet argues, University current systems focus, from a perspective of epistemology and knowledge production, academic results in a *stricto sensu* in articles, metrics and presentations in quantification and metric models.

The experimental modes of the scientific method, the possibility to try, to experiment, to fail in fields as Digital Media are possibilities also to experiment within academic research and practice-based artistic research, simultaneously. These choices connect this research with that “Knowledge Factory.”⁶²Thresholds and sutures that decelerate, reframe and create a critical distance from both the arts and academic fields. A responsibility of working within this correspondences crossroads, in Steyerl terms, documents from both sides a *dialogue in disso-*

⁶² Raunig, Gerald. “Factories of Knowledge, Industries of Creativity, trans.” *Aileen Derieg (Los Angeles: Semiotext (e), 2013) p 102*. Also a reader of Virno, Raunig has questioned the role of University in this debate.

nance. Once from artistic and academic practices, once from Digital Media and its Critical Terms.

3.4 A Genealogy of Ghosts



image 1 - © Renata Siqueira Bueno “Luciérnagas” (2008)

This section focuses on a methodology to retrieve in a digital landscape these video footages left in Youtube.com, sketching a myriad of digital political fireflies in those spaces of contemporary visualities. In “Nietzsche, la généalogie, l’Histoire”(1978) Michel Foucault writes about the necessity of looking at “particular events”. To the author, genealogy research is not about “origin”. Events are, in their fragmented composition, their own essence. In contemporaneity, this formulation is problematic. General conceptualisation tends to homogenise and perceive a “mass image” as a “total” image. Furthermore, Youtube.com meta-business is an adequate grid for these visual perceptions and consequent modulations of visual culture, hence visualisation scales in the platform are easily enormous, creating a “big data” reference systems.

An attempt to detach singular videos of previous referred social movements in Youtube.com platform and to shape a patchwork of moving images, intentions and sounds, descriptions, titles and other possible dialogues, between these small scale uprising testimonies, designs itself as a method to introduce a *horizon of coupure* in digital imagery universe. Effects

of recollecting and retrieving applied to a continuous flow of images can constitute a counter-movement of visibility. A gesture aligned with notions of counter-history as in Walter Benjamin, but also in Gilles Deleuze approach to Franz Kafka's "minor literature"(1980). As Georges Didi-Huberman describes in "Survivance des Lucioles": "une lumière mineure possédant les mêmes caractères philosophiques: "un fort coefficient de déterritorialisation"; "tout y est politique"; "tout prend une valeur collective" (Didi-Huberman, 2009, p.44).

The idea of gathering small singularities in a digital environment, combining and exposing them, as part of a visibility strategy, and a consequent new order of political images, addresses what is a present meaning on minor communities "tout y parle du peuple et "des conditions révolutionnaires"(Didi-Huberman, 2009, p.44). "Fireflies" as an analogy, brings to evidence a hypothesis of organising different pieces of knowledge, with an ethnographic in print of those who participated in such movements and that were agents in these historical bottom-up events. Those who filmed and shared their footage as part of something collective, who brought to shape their activism with moving images and sounds, under a notion of a *political image* or *protest image*.

These research organised a corpus of Youtube clips, from the demonstrations of 2011. They were chosen under a *situationist criteria*. A Situationist reference here comes close to a notion of emergence of events, of situations, anchored around "International Situationist" movement. In "The Beach Beneath the Street" (2011), a history of the movement, McKenzie Wark defines a Situationist gesture reload as an act of "retrieving a past specific to the demands of this present" (from the Introduction, p.3).

In a methodological conception, a response to "the possibility of low theory, of a critical thought indifferent to the institutional forms of the academy or the art world. A low theory dedicated to the practice that is a critique and the critique that is practice"(Wark, 2011).

Those videos respond to a chronology, close to the dates of the events, uploaded by individuals, uploaded with no editing, as raw materials, preferably with the lowest number of visualisations, in order to create a pattern of *less seen*, which is an opposite logic to Youtube.-com metrics algorithm. What makes these videos so few seen? Its titles, its descriptions? Its intrinsic images? It is interesting to understand if there is a pattern to invisibility.

Clips will be analysed in different layers: within a videographic or filmic analysis tools, close to Manuela Penafria in "Análise de Filmes - Conceitos e Metodologias"(2009), a

comprehensive filmic analysis takes place, referring to moving image and sound units uploaded in the platform, aiming to create a dialogue with aesthetics and politics in these videos. Also, on its digital platform existence characteristics, that means a *multimodal analysis* or *multimedia analysis*. The reception of such videos on a dynamic platform as Youtube.com has many layers of reception and interpretation, also has many changing meanings, connections and even differences in access. A qualitative analysis and interpretation take place to create a corpus of videos that shape a concept - *digital image fireflies*.

As presented before, the notion of "the articulation of protest", as in Hito Steyerl's text, with critical and aesthetic potential, dialogues with the politics of the movements project themselves on a chronology of 2011 events.

Thus an analysis of such videos has been developed as a Youtube.com channel to support it - "*imagensprecárias*" -, to aggregate data and pattern a compelling overview of a corpus of films. This channel is a research tool in several ways. In Youtube.com terrain a channel becomes a working station itself - where an archive or constellation is constituted with several visual materials, available according to with Youtube.com diversity and interface interaction logics, that are here explored in its interactive modules - visualisation screen, suggested videos, channels information and comments scroll. Remediated videos, scholar presentations, conferences from authors present in this text, but also film sequences, interviews or some other random materials as a referential provider.

Imagens Precárias Youtube channel stores research with an alignment of selected clips of protest images from demonstrations of 2011, organised by movements: #Arab Springs, #Movimento12M, #Madrid15M and #OccupyWallStreet. Nevertheless, there also exists a tab with videos from Iran Green Movement and a tab called Headlights, where public conferences, footage from theorist present in the bibliography create a more comprehensive thread to understand with this corpus of films. A minimum of 20 videos per movement was listed. But the selection started with a predecessor set of 13 videos from 2009 *Iranian Green Movement*⁶³. The *arabsprings* playlist has 45 videos⁶⁴, the Portuguese *movimento12m* has 85 vi-

⁶³ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbNeuB_Z4379trzanv-YECFvuQPXx0zG

⁶⁴ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbNeuB_Z4378HZ_NGTIuF2LwtrDlwfdRV

deos⁶⁵, the Spanish *democraciarealya*⁶⁶ has 22 videos and *occupyWS*⁶⁷ has 41 videos selected.

Concrete data is separated in different categories and organised: a first set focus on the video itself. Its title, length, description, where it was uploaded, the type of channel, that in these videos are mostly non-profit organisations and activism, the number of visualisations, description of the video, likes, dislikes and commentaries, their number, and quoted commentaries that appear shortly above the video in the screen interface. The characteristics of the channels are part of the analysis, as dialectic workflow, an identity profiling of the channel, from a presentation and reception perspective - between creator and viewer. The last part of this multimodal analysis is another flow analysis - the comments on the video, which Youtube.com interface presents since the date of upload. For example, comments and answers to uploaded videos are intact in video page. They can be a precious tool of analysis of multimedia and multimodal reception of each video, becoming a relevant source of autonomous data, but that also interact in the interface with other elements in determinant ways.

3.5 Concatenating Constellations

This section refers to a set of materials used to established and proposes a theoretical framework and context within a comparative analysis to the **objectives** and **goals** of the resultant practical artefact of this research, a **platform film**. To achieve such goal, after an analysis of a corpus of protest images of 2011 digital social movements, released in Youtube.com, as presented before, is developed an artefact of creative practice, a **prototype**. This object shapes an experimental activist platform, based on a **video editor**, whose participatory goal is to upload personal footage of protest videos and create individual timelines, interacting collectively to produce a mosaic film.

What modes of artistic and activist interaction can be established with this footage in order to create such collective portraits on an interactive and multimedia platform?

⁶⁵ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbNeuB_Z4378Eg1uM6qSbAwZxs2CcSfFk

⁶⁶ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbNeuB_Z437-wPnU1LuI99rZS-4dH769e

⁶⁷ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbNeuB_Z437-UC5RfCqEm-kfuUFrYZKXe

This section will identify and justify what modes of production were used, which examples and practices and with what consequences. How were developed the process of constitution of a platform film and its modes of production? What were its structure, theoretical concepts and the material examples? For the constitution of this digital artefact, the corpus of the platform, transversal references as experimental methods were used in its design and functionalities. The modes of production of the platform were divided in different fields, or axis of creative questions and answers that come from different areas as political art production, theatre, public installations, experimental and documentary cinema, or everyday objects that reveal extreme political practices, like clothing and patchwork. An experiment on experimental methods could be described as a *détournement* in itself, once the focus here is how to “bring” to digital landscapes “outsider” strategies, that in their fields correspond to political artistic answers, hence correspond in their problems to similar interrogations as the one of this study.

This research to experiment on the development of an artefact, analyses a set of archive documentaries, or montage films using footage. Moreover, compares examples of political and essay films, whose aesthetic questions also share political concerns and whose work focused on relations that are present in these research questions: as dialectical relations between collective-individual, memory and images, or Cinema and History.

This set of films also appear from conflictual moments, revolts and revolutions and answers to *what examples of collective portraits do Cinema and History appropriate. What montage documentaries from protest images and demonstrations work as essay films?* A set of historical films are like anchors of strategy to this study. The first one is a reconnection to **Chris Marker** “Le Fond de l’Air est Rouge” (1978). The film is a long montage film, with footage from several conflicts of the 20th century.

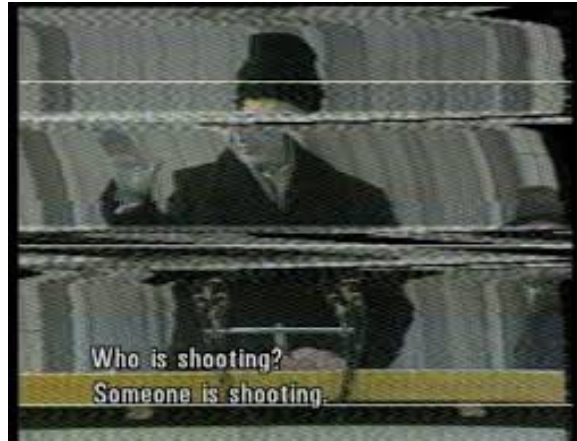


image 2 - “*Le Fond de L’Air est Rouge*”(1978) © Marker, Chris and image 3 - “*Videograms of a Revolution*”(1992), © Farocki, Harun and Andrei, Ujica

The second film analysed is “*Videograms of a Revolution*”(1992) by **Harun Farocki** and **Andrei Ujica**, a film that testimonies also a revolt, an uprising, filmed during the Romanian coup d’État against Ceausescu dictatorship and using dispersed footage from individuals that were present in the streets of Bucharest. This film made, in a sense, an earlier video analogic version of what happened in digital uprisings of 2011, directly tying a political immediacy and its image. With a reflexive montage by Harun Farocki and Andrei Ujica

A third film reveals a Portuguese experience in a political documentary tradition, with a film about the Carnation Revolution in Portugal. “*As Armas e o Povo*”(1975) is an iconic cinematographic piece of those days, a collective film made by a collective, **Colectivo de Trabalhadores da Actividade Cinematográfica**, which portrayed the 1st May demonstration in Lisbon, in 1974, 5 days after the coup that ended dictatorship in Portugal. A film signed as collective, that is a milestone in cooperative cinema debate in Portuguese cinematography.



image 4 - “*As Armas e o Povo*”,(1975), © Colectivo de Trabalhadores da Actividade Cinematográfica⁶⁸

Another set of films has been used as an analogy and references to experiment on the individual pole of interaction in the platform development to question a multitude's portrait as a tension between collective portrait and self-portrait. Some self-portrait artworks were references, as these two films that were part of this dialogue. The first, as a prototype to multimedia language, is “*JLG par JLG: autoportrait de Décembre*” by **Jean Luc Godard** (1994), where a preconception of what multimedia modes of production are, exposed in a layered and multi-meanings sense of creation developed singularly.

Although linear, a montage structure in this Jean-Luc Godard film opens the door to a personal constitution of multifaceted creative “use” of the self, in a kaleidoscopic sense - almost a prototype of social media personal cascades. In a tradition of “video sediment” cinema of his works as “*Histoires du Cinéma*”(Jean Luc Godard, 1998), this film focuses the self. It is a theoretical and aesthetic avant-garde moment of fragmentation, as a previous proof of a cinematic regime, remembering Lev Manovich argument in “*The Language of New Media*”(2001), about cinema as pre-multimedia language, with incorporating painting, music, literature. Also, the fact that at the centre of the film, there is a self-portrait that entails a dialogue with theorising self-construction and individual identity, brought later in contemporary digital landscapes.

⁶⁸<http://www.cinemateca.pt/Cinemateca/Noticias/As-Armas-e-o-Povo%E2%80%9D-no-Festival-Lumiere.aspx>

Also, another filmmaker's self-portrait in the middle of a conflict is **Robert Kramer** “10/90”(1990), where the filmmaker makes a “self sequence plan” film of one hour, doubling his portrait and image as a double projection of external events in Berlin and Eastern Europe politics, that were happening in the city streets. An individual monologue, confined in his hotel bathroom, with an exterior collective, is part of a starting point in this project to create a frame to a sense of selfless in a multitude. A visual concept in the film, also precedes a digital aesthetics of self-interview facilitated and banalised through webcams, personal computers and vlogging practices, that nowadays are spread globally. These films influence experimental a stage of creation of the platform film in its strategies, as forms and solutions in aesthetic terms and affections.



image 5 - “JLG/JLG Autoportrait de décembre” (1994), © Jean Luc Godard⁶⁹ and image 6 - “10/90”(1990), Robert Kramer.⁷⁰

To the development of the platform, and specifically, their **edition table features** three other references work. The first film referenced, by Jean Rouch, is addressed from a sonic perspective, “*Moi, un Noir*”(1959) and the uses of narration in the platform. Also, the possibilities of writing, drawing and creating a “quotation system” as sedimentation in the timelines, is a reference to another Jean Luc Godard set of films, as appears in an analysis by George Didi-Huberman of this filmmaker works in “*Passés cités par JLG*” (2015). Together with the work journey of Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci-Lucchi is also part of a methodology of experimentation in this artefact, considering the development of a cinematic machine itself and affection embodied by the use of colour.

⁶⁹ http://www.film-documentaire.fr/4DACTION/w_fiche_film/9686_2 last accessed March 2020

⁷⁰ http://www.film-documentaire.fr/4DACTION/w_fiche_film/3309 last accessed March 2020

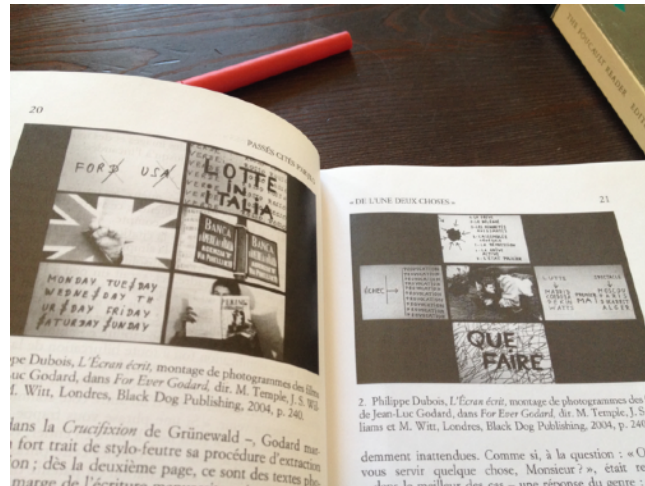


image 7- “Moi, un Noir” (1959), Jean Rouch, and image 8 - a detail of “L’Écran écrit”, by Philippe Dubois, in “Forever Godard”, (2003) from Georges Didi-Huberman, “Passé Cité par JLG” (2015).

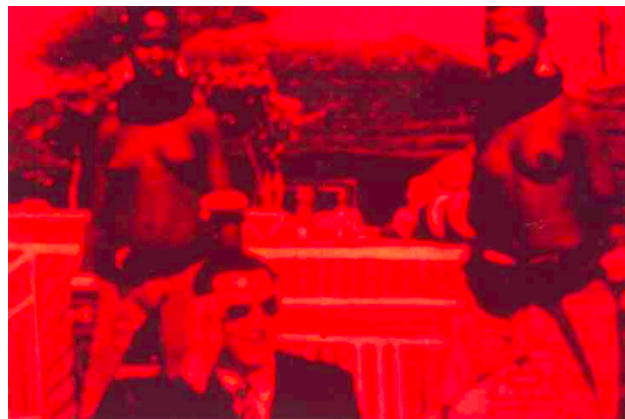


image 9 - “La Marche de l'Homme” (2001), © Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi,⁷¹

The next set of data will refer more contemporary production, from different perspectives, like montage and archival footage from protest moments, and second from a perspective of collaborative construction, with a focus on social movements of 21st-century. There is already a group of films that addresses these historical periods. First, the contemporary experiences in fields as interactive documentary and new media art, like the works of Lara Baladi⁷², “On Revolution” by Alisa Lebow⁷³, or pioneer “18daysinegypt.com.”⁷⁴ where “Arab springs” were terrain for innovation and exploratory cinematic objects, within its intricate relation with social media and revolutionary possibilities. These i-docs with collective foota-

⁷¹ <https://www.centrepompidou.fr/media/document/14/f7/14f77767759060560b3877a4b664df5f/normal.pdf>

⁷² <https://arts.mit.edu/artists/lara-baladi/#about-the-residency> last accessed March 2020

⁷³ <https://www.filmrevolution.org/> last accessed March 2020

⁷⁴ <http://beta.18daysinegypt.com/> last accessed March 2020

ge and participatory structures about 2011 movements, with a political representation, were selected from MIT Open Doc Lab⁷⁵ database and represent the first wave of artistic visual objects on these historical events. Also, linear films, that appeared from this period, like “Dreamocracy”(2014), by Raquel Freire, “Vers Madrid, the Burning Bright”(2012) by Sylvain George, “99% Occupy Collective film” (2013) mentioned as part of a mapping of references. However, there was not a focus on their procedures and cinematic solutions to the creative development of the artefact.

The case of **Peter Snowdon** work is treated here in a double perspective. His film, “Uprisal”(2013), a footage film of “Arab springs” is part of a lineage of Youtube.com archive films, that shapes the pertinence in a contemporary cinema perspective of the field of political digital imagery and their problematics. Also, this author’s theoretical proposals, developed in a Practice-Based PhD, that culminated in his doctoral thesis “The Revolution Will Be Uploaded: Vernacular Video and Documentary Film Practice After the Arab Spring” from University of Hasselt, Belgium, 2016 reviewed in his article “The Revolution Will be Uploaded: Vernacular Video and the Arab Spring.”⁷⁶ Despite this recent work, this study only focused this list as a comparative basis, rather than a referential one. An experimental practice of specific features of the platform focuses on premisses from the historical first set of films, where some conceptual framework aligned and designed particular tools of *activism intervention*.

Georges Didi-Huberman creates a grid of thoughts and images through this process. It initiated with the text “La Survivance des Lucioles” (2009), from where derives a concept of digital fireflies images, as explained before. Nevertheless, this research also took a close reading of Georges Didi-Huberman rationale in “L'Oeil de L'Histoire”, trying to create a digital correspondence to some proposed grids of thoughts and images, sounds and videos, produced in contemporary digital times, particularly “Peuples Exposés, Peuples Figurants”(2012) that represents an initial questioning on the collective portrait. Thus, “L'Oeil de L'Histoire” (2010-2016) with its six books, “Quand Les Images Prennent Position”(2009), “Remontage du Temps Subi”(2010), “Atlas ou Le Gai Savoir Inquiet”(2011), “Passés Cités par JLG”(2015), “Peuples en Larmes, Peuples en Armes”(2016) are a presence in several knots of this disser-

⁷⁵ <https://docubase.mit.edu/> last accessed March 2020

⁷⁶ Snowdon, Peter. *The Revolution Will Be Uploaded: Vernacular Video and Documentary Film Practice After the Arab Spring*. Diss. PhD dissertation, University of Hasselt, Belgium, 2016 and Snowdon, Peter. “The revolution will be uploaded: Vernacular video and the Arab Spring.” *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research* 6.2 (2014): 401-429.

tation. “Soulèvements” (2016) - an exhibition and a catalogue with texts by Marie José Mondzain or Antonio Negri, for example also belong to the itinerary proposed by this author in a double reading- written and visual. An image constitution of history and a History of emancipatory images is essayed under a concept of montage as thought, as a system of writing and reading images.



image 9 - detail of exhibition “Soulèvements” 2016, Jeu de Paume, Paris

3.6 Trespassing Areas: on Experimental Methods to a Concatenated Digital Artefact

How to develop a collective portrait within such an approach in digital modes of production?

A vision of a utopian machine, from an abstraction to a concatenated machine of art and activism- activist machine- making resistances visible. Methodology approaches based on crossing different methods to different fields. Such strategy appropriated different references from contemporary art that worked within some horizons of this research, as the question of materialisation in the chosen materials and spaces of political art, as the question of participation or reception of public art projects by their publics.

A relevant part of such proposal was to establish this dialogue with an artist that does not work in digital art in his approach. An attempt here was to create transversal proximity and practice that surpasses technological confinements. Although it does not reject it, instead creates a connection with political art landscapes. Also relevant was to establish a connection in theoretical terms. The importance of theory and an artist theoretical based-practice or related

practice was significant as a kind of methodological guide to the work. For example, someone who has an artistic practice philosophically based, which deepens a focus on processual relations with the public, as in public art installations.

The chosen artist is contemporary sculptor Thomas Hirschhorn, an international presence in the art market at a global scale, with several projects in major biennales, art fairs and galleries, with different kinds of work and interventions on sculpture, photography, drawing. Main works that were analysed or used in this research were the public art installations, once they are considered, by its “public space” characteristics, more transversal to virtual space settlement metaphors. In this group of work, the project of Philosophers Monuments was a central focus. Gramsci, Deleuze, Bataille and Spinoza were the philosophers chosen by Thomas Hirschhorn. A primary source to analyse comes from this artist writings, dispersed in different documents, letters, articles, collected edition “Critical Laboratory” edited by Lisa Lee (MIT, 2013).

Several influential theorists wrote about this artist like Benjamin Buchloh, Claire Bishop, Lisa Lee. Another relevant source is the essay by Hal Foster in “Bad New Days” (2015) and more in-depth analysis by Christina Braun, “Thomas Hirschhorn: A New Political Understanding of Art?” (2018), two poles in this research to interpret this artist's work and theory. Following his different strategies, first, as attitude to address politically and aesthetically contemporaneity, “to affront actuality”, and consistency in the choice of materials along with a constitution of art publics and common spaces.

In the axis of prototyping interaction, a methodological approach has been focused in conceptions of theatrical experience and performance as humanistic metaphors, from classic “Computer as Theater” by Brenda Laurel (1994). The interpretation of this work is sustained by a theoretical approach, that enables a sphere of computer-human interaction as a space of *relational exchanges*, appropriating theatrical stage as a space of human actions and relations, following Aristotle's “Poetic”. Continuing with this line, within theatrical metaphor, and exploring Brenda Laurel's concepts, a relation with Bertolt Brecht political and epic theatre (“Brecht on Theatre”, 2014) is established, as a direct influence in creative modes of interaction with the audience and its consequent impact on the social corpus. Therefore, a theoretical horizon of critical thinkers continues to endorse from these modes of production, as left tradition practices, defined by Hal Foster in “Bad New Days”(2015).

To this structure corresponds the development of the actual platform, as a canvas to publish, edit and re-use video, sound, images and text. A *boro* platform made of visual patches from “big garbage bucket”, a sedimentation locus. An interaction interface implemented with a tailored video editor to insert in the platform, with specific tools developed from artistic and film works as described earlier. The development of the platform as a site and sketching platform's interaction, between individual and the collective, is a metaphor for social movements that produced these images. Also refers to a paradoxical balance between two images: self-portrait shaped through an individual timeline. And a collective portrait or a mosaic, or patchwork of a common archive. Developing an interface that gets close to an image of a fragmented visuality, made with patches from films, with visible separating lines and using key-words, titles and type of media files as described in the middle of the mosaic are planned as primordial elements designed from transversal exchanges of used methodologies.

4. A GENEALOGY OF GHOSTS, YOUTUBE.COM DIGITAL FIREFLIES

This chapter embodies an analysis of a corpus of protest videos retrieved from Youtube.com, organised in a Youtube.com channel, through a conception of “digital fireflies” as proposed partly in Literature Review and Methodology. Such universe is composed of protest videos of 2011 social movements, that have been presented before as “movements of the Squares”, known as “Arab Springs”, Portuguese movement “M12M”, Spanish “15M” and “Occupy WS”, respectively. A first section reinforces a genealogical gesture to these retrievals. Secondly, it analyses ten years of Youtube.com, the online video platform that hosts the universe of videos recollected here. The last part proposes an original reading of such communities.

“Genealogy is grey, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and re-copied many times.” (Michel Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”, in “Foucault Reader”, 1984, p.139).

The first line of the text is clear. Procedures of genealogy are not clean-cut, sharp, chasing new. Instead, they claim for a re-appropriation strategy, a journey into smaller paths instead of central routes. To dig into actuality and garbage bins of contemporaneity, “to affront actuality”. These methodologies are often close to procedures of resistance, and once these are spaces and possibilities where resistance constitutes itself in empty spaces of historical narratives. To face small traits that constitute a genealogy a methodic gesture is crucial - “however, genealogy retrieves an indispensable restraint: it must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality; it must seek them in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history” (Foucault, 1984, p.139). A genealogical approach, in Michel Foucault own terms, should be patient, thorough, dealing with small materials, instead of searching for long evolutions or significant events of history, search for small truths “*without appearance*”.

One relevant quest is: a challenge to high historiography itself and its consequent readings “it rejects the metahistorical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies. it opposes itself to the search for “origins.”(Foucault, 1984, p.140). The author in the text, questions a pursuit of origin, “Ursprung” in Nietzsche’s work - “Why does Nietzsche chal-

lenge the pursuit of the origin (Ursprung), at least on those occasions when he is truly a genealogist? Because it is an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities and their carefully protected identities. This search also assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession.”(Foucault, 1984, p.142).

A genealogical gestures, therefore focus on deviations, accidents, disparities - “if the genealogist (...) listens to history, he finds that there is “something altogether different” behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence”. (Foucault, 1984, p.142).

They all belong to a grammar theoretical and aesthetic, as a certain tradition of artists has, as Didi-Huberman constellation makes evident, that are accidents, fragments that enclose History dots. To Foucault “What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity.”. (Foucault, 1984, p.142). It is in the midst of confusion, of trivial, of vernacular, even of disposable materials, there happen ways to historical understanding, even in the “garbage bin” or *visual continent* of Youtube.com.

4.1 Youtube.com, a visual decade

The Youtube historical and political impacts have different strands of interest and consequent different approaches to its study. If approached from the point of view of the archive and archival studies perspective, Youtube terrain has one configuration, if, from the perspective of participatory and popular culture, the pleiad of new emergent social figures to study is vast, but what has definitely changed is the way moving images have been created, recreated and disseminated through this global commercial platform. Visual culture, anthropology of image, visual studies, memory studies, image history, even history of art, a large spectrum of disciplines of visibility are and will be contaminated and transformed, by this meta-content aggregator online business, on their research horizons.

Some essential references contributed to this inescapable Youtube.com trajet. The first is the importance of the early acquisition of Youtube.com by Google Inc. The functioning logic and search algorithm that this fusion brought to Youtube.com specifically with features like the well known suggested videos tab on the right side of the viewing screen where a

continuous stream of videos can be easily accessed in the users' interface is part of the robust search engine code of Google Inc. This fact has brought Youtube.com as a reference of online video platform systems, but far more than that, an entire field in digital visual culture in itself.

Although there is not a vast amount of Youtube.com studies as an autonomous research topic, this research will point two works that perspective it as a whole integrated system. The first characterises it as an idealised projection in its early years. The second, between the first and the second edition, makes a balance of ten years of the platform.

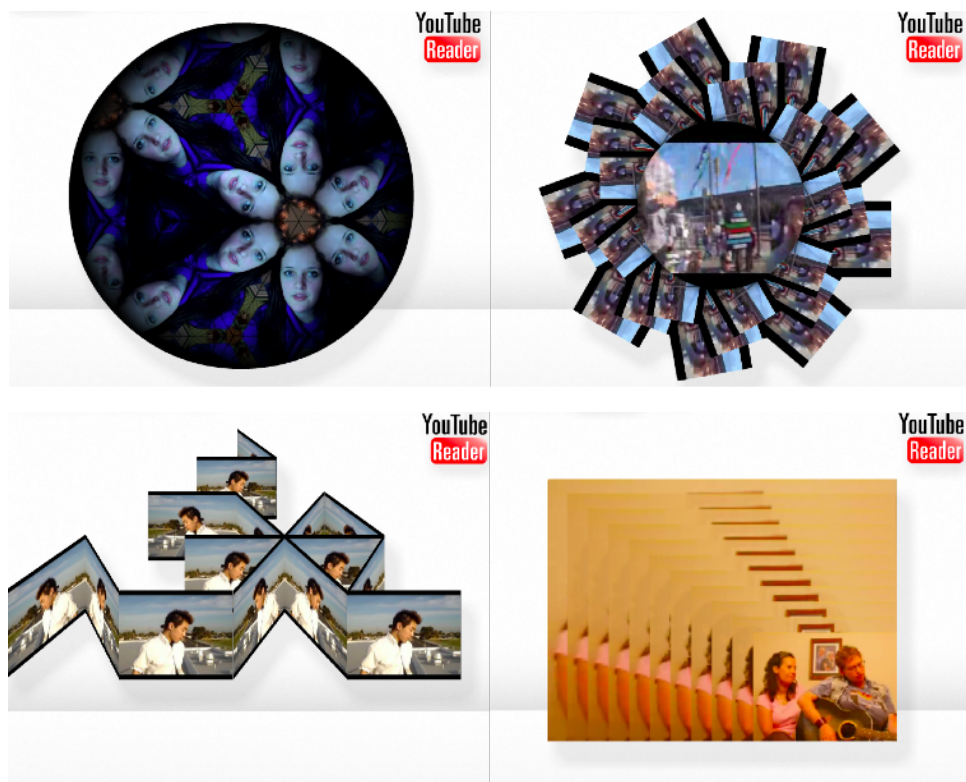


image 11 - a composite of details from © www.youtubereader.com online exhibition modes of view - meta-reflections, global reflections, reflections and mirror paradox.

4.1.1 "www.youtubereader.com."

This first particular object referred here, dedicated exclusively to Youtube.com it is a work called "The Youtube Reader". A site, <http://www.youtubereader.com/>, with an online edition, where it can be accessed the book edition openly, but also with an online exhibition. The editors of the project were Pelle Snickars and Patrick Vonderau, an edition of the Kungliga Biblioteket, the National Library of Sweden in 2009. This edition gives state of the art, ten ye-

ars ago, where several scholars wrote their projections on the future of a rising audiovisual online platform. The edition presented in Patrick Vonderau personal site, in this clear sum-up: “Youtube has come to epitomise the possibilities of digital culture. With more than seventy million users a month and approximately eighty million videos online, this brand-name video distribution platform hold the richest repository of popular culture on the Internet. As the fastest growing site in the history of the Web, Youtube promises endless new opportunities for amateur video, political campaigning, entertainment formats, and viral marketing - a clip culture that has seemed to outpace both cinema and television”.

The book, as explained, “is the first full-length book to explore Youtube as an industry, an archive, and cultural form”. Concepts organise the different chapters as **Mediality, Usage, Form, Storage, Industry and Curatorship**. Contributors have written texts about different aspects of Youtube.com, which makes this volume a unique constellation of media, economic and political theory projections. As Jean Burgess and Joshua Green referred “there were not at the time many scholars researching Youtube as a medium itself” in “Youtube, Online Video and Participatory Culture” (2009, 2018), with an exception made for “The Youtube Reader” project in its full extension.

William Uricchio, Thomas Elsaesser, Bernard Stiegler, Richard Grusin, Mark Andrejevic, Patrick Vonderau and Pelle Snickars have addressed several initial questionings about what Youtube.com future landscapes would be. Each one contributes in their own conceptual terms, references and research and it is quite revealing to understand nowadays what Youtube.com has not turned out to be, but also how these authors reflected in their projections, what has happened instead.

The introduction pinpoints Youtube.com dialectics, “The peculiarity of YouTube, then, lies in the way the platform has been negotiating and navigating between community and commerce” and that at the centre of its management it was known that “the platform’s “community value” derived from the exponentially growing number of videos generated by amateurs, but it also knew that professionally produced entertainment would increase traffic.” (Snickars and Vonderau, 2009, p.11).

One of the remarking aspects of this work is an approach to Youtube.com as a multi-layered object. One aspect of this is a notion that “From a computer-science viewpoint, YouTube is nothing but a database”, is defined with one of the most integrative metaphors, plat-

form. “The notion of “platform” is only one of several metaphors widely used to stress YouTube’s social, economic and technological importance”, reinforcing its definition as an emergent media institution. “Youtube is often spoken about as if it were a library, an archive, a laboratory or a medium like television”, hypothesis that were part of exploratory metaphors for the online video platform. At that point, a comparative approach of a new medium, within its early stages of establishment with older ones, reconfiguring former cultural systems and technologies. One example is the archival metaphor: “Whether or not one likes, the distinctiveness of media dissolving into a pulsing stream of bits and bytes, traditional media archives are facing the fact that sites like YouTube have become default media-archive interfaces” (Snickars and Vonderau, 2009, p.14).

Two other analogies will make its way in the platform, in following years, the dynamics of television and the experiences of a laboratory, and from its characteristics, one could speak of an **online audiovisual laboratory on digital culture**. “As a medium emerging after the digital turn, YouTube appears to imitate television’s specific practices. Arguably, among old 20th-century media, television has been the most successful in attuning itself to the new digital environment. Radio is ubiquitous on the Web, but within the visual culture that will allegedly dominate the Internet in the future, digital video has been vital”. (Snickars and Vonderau, 2009, p.15). After a short four years of existence, this relation to television was the theme of William Uricchio text - “The Future of a Medium Once Known as Television” - where the author attempted to reflect on Youtube as a “set of practices - both corporate and popular”, questioning them as a process of media transformation, implicated in the crisis and shifts of two other media, television and cinema. One of the inputs of Uricchio text is an interesting evaluation of how Youtube - “specifically interrogates the intermedial mix available in networked computing environments”, seen as “reflecting the uncertainties of a new medium as it struggles to find its own expressive capacities” (Uricchio, 2009, p.28).

In one hand, the platform incorporated precedent audiovisual habits of television consumption in an online environment, but also exploratory practices of user’s content creation in digital “participatory culture”, monitored and tracked as visualisations, likes, comments and embedded systems. Thus, specifically, the “uncertainty” of the site, is also the reverse of its dynamics. In the case of 2011 uprisings, the technological affordances of the platform, with its synthesis of experimental video activism and at the same time, potent broadcasting

broadband of a television channel, made a right balance for production and dissemination of abundant protest videos that invaded the Web and made Youtube part of a toolset of activism, up to the rhythm of political events. Appropriation of early media potential is part of a global movement described by Peter Weibel (2014), once “the passive viewer has been replaced by the participant, the co-creator, the fellow player”(Weibel, 2014, p.57).

A last remark on the book connects with the online exhibition curated by Giovanna Fossati. In her words: “Youtube reflects you, and you reflect (on) Youtube. On the other side of the mirror, Youtubers are watching. Reflections are endless and endlessly reflecting into one another, like a mirror maze.”(Fossati, 2009)⁷⁷ The online exhibition divides into different kinds of mirror metaphors. “Reflections” places the individual in front of the machine - *Youtube is you in front of a mirror*. A construction like a house of cards, each screen ends in the next one. “Global reflections”, where a central image irradiates a cascade of others and focus on the communal aspect, “Some reflections have spread throughout the community and spilt into the real world”. “Meta Reflections” has a circular, kaleidoscopic image, questioning Youtube’s relations with other media. “Mirror Paradox” creates a horizon of an endless image.

Although in 2009, “So far, media studies have all but ignored the public interest in the YouTube phenomenon ” (Burgess and Green, 2009, p.17) there were some exceptions like Video Vortex Reader project organised by Geert Lovink, a series of conferences organised by Amsterdam Institute of Network Cultures and a two-volume edition, 2008 and 2011 ⁷⁸.

4.1.2 Youtube, Online Video and Participatory Culture - 2009-2018

Jean Burgess and Joshua Green in “Youtube, Online Video and Participatory Culture” (2009, 2018) organised their work with an emphasis in the spectrum of analysis that Youtube.com presupposes and asks for, questioning it through popular culture and cultural politics, as a social network and its relation with mainstream media. With an opening question on a reveal-

⁷⁷ <http://www.youtubereader.com/>, last accessed April 2020.

⁷⁸ Geert Lovink and Rachel Somers Miles (eds), *Video Vortex Reader II: moving images beyond YouTube*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2011. ISBN: 978-90-78146-12-4, paperback, 378 pages and Geert Lovink and Sabine Niederer (eds.), *Video Vortex Reader: Responses to YouTube*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2008. ISBN: 978-90-78146-05-6.

ling chapter “How Youtube matters?” all these perspectives communicate and permeate each other.

The book, in its two versions, has a ten years interval that corresponds to the development of the platform itself. The balance and changes the authors make between the two versions are, somehow, the symptoms and confirmations of such dynamics. As Jean Burgess remarks on the preface to the second edition (2018), the book’s original aim was “to work through some of the often competing ideas about just what Youtube is, and what it might or might not turn out to be for” (from the preface to the second edition, 2018). A decade after, a second edition comes with a different perspective on the platform life length:

“Youtube has transformed significantly in the past ten years. It has, of course, continued to grow at dizzying rates, but also it has changed in terms of its business model, its interface and features, its cultural role, and the extent to which it regulates content and behaviour. It has evolved from a disruptive “Web 2.0” start-up to one of the most powerful platforms in the digital media environment that is dominated by them. Those early competing ideas about what it was, and what it was “for”, while far from settled, are now more widely understood”(Burgess and Green, 2009). For these authors, and for those who expected new studies, a second edition was a non expected movement, but at the same time, Burgess’s argument is clear - “we believe that many of our original findings and arguments have stood the test of time quite well.”(Burgess and Green, 2009).

The main argument still is - “Youtube’s value - what it turned out to be “for” so far - was co-created by Youtube Inc., now owned by Google, - the users who upload the content to the website, and the audiences who engage around that content.”(Burgess and Green, 2009, p.vi). The authors interpret content contributors as a diverse group, including a wide variety of media producers, from commercial aims to intimate vloggers, professional and amateurs, channels of institutional profile to the most “out of format” or activist media. Following their argument, these participants approached Youtube “with their own purposes and aims and collectively [shaped] Youtube as a dynamic cultural system”. Their punchline still is “participatory culture is Youtube’s core business.” It is still part of an understanding of the platform, the “cultural logic of the community, openness, and authenticity are embedded in the Youtube platform and brand at all scales of commerciality”, from almost anonymous uses to “*global tubers stars*”(Burgess and Green, 2009).

Despite this apparent stable model, some question remains through an analysis of the platform decade. It is not only about participatory culture value creation, but instead, *what kind of participation or co-creation* within the platform has Youtube.com promoted, permitted and shaped along these years, through its features transformations.

One of the tasks the authors propose themselves “to interrogate the emergent politics and contradictions of commercially mediated participatory that the story of Youtube represents so clearly”(Burgess and Green, 2009) is part of an in-depth understanding of one of the most influential media in general and in visual culture particularly. Some remarks from the revisions in the second edition, that remake the argument about global status of Youtube nowadays, are the designation not of a website anymore, but instead of a platform, and how the platform structure has become dominant in digital rhetoric, from attention economy to political parties action⁷⁹. The structural architecture, plasticity and complexity of such a system are deeper than primary interactive site configurations type.

A second remark concerns the disappearance of a “terminology that has become dated”, like “new media” and “Web 2.0”, emerging instead a more non-specific and extensive language terminology and consequently a more durable one. Another question to notice is part of the same observation, the shift in naming the contributors from “users” and “user profiles” to “creators” and “channels”. The “tube” prefers now to assume a “creative laboratory” metaphor, detached from the common ground of social media, becoming autonomous and self-referential. The same logic can be registered when applied to its interconnections. Burgess and Green prefer to talk now about communities instead of “social networks” as it was the name of the original chapter.

In one hand, Youtube has self transformed, distancing from a logic of the social network, and can no longer inscribe in a cultural logic of social networks like Facebook or Twitter, nor its political economy. Youtube explores the strength of moving image and its interconnection with mobile phones technologies as multimedia gadgets. It has evolved in a logic of its own, where it has distanced from other social networks, creating an autonomous community and identities in itself, along with a well-placed position of being a kind of visual continent of Google, sharing part of Google’s advantage in the market, the search engine strategies, or the famous algorithm.

⁷⁹ examples are the latest article by Paolo Gerbaudo “The Platform Party: The Transformation of Political Organisation in the Era of Big Data 187-198, edited, by Christian Fuchs or José Van Dijck “Platform Society”(2018).

When it comes to visual culture, Youtube is making the same move as Google, referring to the Web. Google as a Web Browser looks like *it is the* World Wide Web, and seems to substitute the Web itself. Youtube explores this dimension into visual culture patterns. When it comes to moving images, the first search choice goes to Youtube.com, and this is now a contemporary global gesture, with its implications.

Youtube.com balance still is about those who make videos and those who search for them and watch. There is an equilibrium between creators - the updated expression mentioned by the authors - and viewers, that works through a video “search” interface. The last remark is about a clarification on the non-existence of differences between mainstream media and Youtube.com, that has now become also mainstream and part of institutional communication strategies of archetypal organisations like the Library of Congress, for instance.

Nowadays, there is, consequently, a more complex relation with mainstream companies, hence converging visual economy has brought to the Web a circularity of products, migrating from one medium to another and being Youtube.com a crucial part of that circuit. The leading broadcasting companies have Youtube.com channels, either movie production houses, broadcasters or music labels, along with the Web-native media companies, that are part of the 21st-century digital economy profile, with innovative strategies to grasp the market, like Netflix. It is a central part of a media business strategy, to be present in Youtube, cohabiting environments, where perhaps a more extensive diversity of media ecologies is possible to observe.

Despite all these changes, the description of the platform in its core architecture is the same, and these features continue to be its significant strengths: “Its original purpose was, on the surface, a technological rather than a cultural one: Youtube was one of several services aiming to remove the technical barriers faced by non-experts who wanted to share videos on the Web. The website provided a straightforward integrated interface that enabled people to upload, publish and view streaming videos without much technical knowledge, using standard web browsers and modest internet speeds. Youtube set no limits on the number of videos users could upload, offered basic social functions like the opportunity to connect with other users as friends and provided links and HTML code that enabled videos to be easily embedded into other sites”(Burgess and Green, 2009, p.25)

This explanation of Youtube.com features and basic functioning reveal that still is its primary asset its specific modes of use, that led Youtube.com to its position in the media environment in actuality. Although not intended as such since early days of its creation, the truth is that, as affirmed by these authors, the commercial potential of video sharing online platform was a promise that the creators of Youtube.com foresaw: “the original vision appeared to be that video content shot on mobile phones would be a catalyst to online connections, perhaps even involving dating, which in turn would increase the Youtube user base and could generate advertising and subscription revenue”(Burgess and Green, 2009). The premises of Youtube.com are there. A foster environment for people to upload, share, view, “participate” and create user habits, with the consequent ads and publicity inserts in their user profile.

The status quo of present days in the platform has maintained its ongoing strategy since the first funding pitches, “Albeit, in an early form, we can see the uneasy convergence between the dual logics of community and commerce, and broadcast and social media - logics that still persisted, competed and conflicted in the Youtube.com of 2017.” The data presented in 2017 is of this order of numbers “in 2017 the company website claimed that their billion users were watching a billion hours of content each day”(Burgess and Green, 2009, p. 145).

Nevertheless - “Despite this hype around a user-generated content revolution (...) it was to be a combination of the mass popularity of particular user-created videos and the ability to watch mainstream media content that made Youtube a dominant platform (...).”(Burgess and Green, 2009, p.147). These are the basic structures that validated Youtube.com trajectory for a decade of existence. Now, as ten years ago, one important conclusion to take from this text is the unstable future of the platform. Youtube.com has changed very much in the last years.

At the present moment, there is a significant shift with an investment in an interface of a music player platform with Youtube.com Music and Youtube.com Premium, with paid subscriptions. As part of a confirmation of initial commercial strategies, as seen before, where free-participatory visual online culture coexists in the same platform as the music or entertainment content aggregator media. Such is the unstable present and future of Youtube.com.

In 2009, Burgess and Green asked: “how might the future of YouTube as a commercial enterprise actually be bound up with the politics of participatory culture?” (Burgess and

Green, 2009, p.103). And the answer by the same authors ten years after results from a reference to a study on a precedent media, television, described by Stephen Heath as - “a somewhat difficult object, unstable, all over the place, tending derisively to escape anything we say about it: given the speed of its changes (in technology, economics, programming), its interminable flow (of images and sounds, their endlessly disappearing present), its quantitative everydayness (the very quality of the medium each and every day)” (Heath, 1990, p.267).

Once a “connection to the community” conception happens, collective and participatory is all around, the question of what kind of participation, remains. Once an understanding of its meaning is relevant to understand not only Youtube.com’s cultural impact but also its transformations of the visual culture contemporaneity, to such analysis this research points some moments of change in politics of participatory culture and configurations of collective digital images.

These changes connect with the rise of Youtube.com as a political possibility of a technological affordance in the early 2010s, when several digital social movements, as described before, took place in different places of the globe. A hybrid public space described by Manuel Castells has in its configuration a central visual element, also, intertwined with an artistic will to express political causes, what was crucial to a “viral” ambience lived on those days, from catalyst images of martyr examples.⁸⁰Not only, moving images that had a strength to ignite individual agency and revolutionary moments.

What happened in the public space, and much indeed came from participatory culture practices, but also from an intersection of these communal possibilities with multimedia gadgets that became part of “habitual new media” as Wendy Chun expressed. As Castells referred, social movements of the XXI st century came with full expressions in a variety of forms and formats and media where the expression of politics converged with an aesthetic expression, the rise of the activism. Peter Weibel curated exhibition “GLOBAL ACTIVISM” (ZKM, 2014). Activist practices became relevant practices in the dawning of this century and reorganised the technological affordances of social media platforms like Youtube.com.

The freedom and participatory rhetoric of the platform, aligned with Google rhetoric on research rigour and knowledge, combine a projected place of free speech and democracy

⁸⁰Such is the history of Mohammed Bouazizi who immolated himself and was one of the initial videos to become viral in Arab Springs. There is probably an investigation to make about the viral videos of such moments and their impact on the chronology of the movements.

in the Web. This is half-truth and that half made possible to watch, analyse and archive thousands of hours of videos from individuals of 2011 movements from Youtube.com. Furthermore, thanks to that half, the technology became emancipatory politics, making valid cyber utopian arguments on participatory culture a historical event. History, in Rancière terms, is no longer enclosed in the top-down choices. Instead, it constructed from a bottom-up perspective, where the “partage”, is not only a technical term for shared but a political gesture within the collective action. Thanks to that, there is a diverse visual environment populating Youtube.com platform with a pleiad of videos, discourses, languages, comments, channels around the social movements since those early 2010s events. Fragments of experience to be recovered, reenacted and redistributed again and again as political possibilities, even when times become darker, like nowadays.

One can relate the first breakthrough with Iranian Green Movement, connected with Presidential Elections of 2009, where several university students uploaded videos directly to Youtube.com of contestation demonstrations against the regime. And then the already referred impressive self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, with a viral strength of indignation around the world that propelled Middle East 2011 events. There is a landmark relationship between social media and 2011 social movements, once Web 2.0 was part of the possibilities' incubation, but also of its enclosure after. Today fake news, social media trolls in politics and electoral campaigns are part of a reaction to the emancipatory moment of those days.

In Youtube, to what matters, a significant shift in the platform has happened, and this change is a symptom of a more in-depth change in the ideology of the Software and the platform user's experience. As Wendy Chun underlines in her text - "On Software, or the Persistence of Visual Knowledge" this concept is elusive in itself. "Software is or should be, a notoriously difficult concept. The current commonsense computer science definition of Software is a "set of instructions that direct a computer to do a specific task." As a set of instructions, its material status is unstable" (Chun, 2005, p.28). The reverse of immateriality is how does it materialise in the digital cultural politics, and how does it revert into *value*?

A continuous flow of software versions or apps reveals, not only an imposed obsolescence, from an economic perspective, but also a visual rhythm. Each version is a visual design compromise, between the last and the newest version. The questions here are not about the features developers claim, but a materialisation of a software or app version as a visual

entity. Moreover, this visual materiality mostly means what Software is to the user, a change in the visual icon.

As Wendy Chun reminds “Software perpetuates certain notions of seeing as knowing, of reading and readability that were supposed to have faded with the waning of indexicality. It does so by mimicking both ideology and ideology critique, by conflating executable with execution, a program with a process, order with action” (Chun, 2005, p.27). This visual contract with the users can extend the notion of platform, as the conclusions about contemporary “Platform Society” drafted in recent works as mentioned before. As Chun writes back - “Software, through programming languages that stem from a gendered system of command and control, disciplines its programmers and users, creating an invisible system of visibility. The knowledge software offers is as obfuscatory as it is revealing.” (Chun, 2005, p.27-28).

Can we instead assist to a moment where the logic of Software, previously designed as inscribed in each computer and user, has become inscribed in the mega-platform as a collective logic? Can these tasks work like a *detrterritorialised* central of operations, where thousands of networked individuals continue to interact, create and consume digital objects, and consequently become digital subjects? As visual knowledge, Software took a step further, embodying in a contemporary moment the shape of platform and *dematerialising* cultural objects, like films, photos and sounds, but also personal devices, computers and mobiles.

The platform architecture in virtual space has centralised several kinds of experiences and its materialities, through an ideological disposition of individual and collective practices such as different Youtube.com uses, under the rhetoric of participatory culture. What sense of awareness of Youtubers have of themselves? What impact would have a narrative of a corporation business restraining movements in favour of a lucrative model? Despite their awareness of these constraints and benefiting from the business model themselves, the narrative about the platform and some of its features continue to fuel the “participatory culture” identities.

Perhaps, even the metaphoric concepts for Youtube.com proposed by Snickars and Vonderau like archive, television, the laboratory would have a feedback reaction and conceptual revision. This is a hypothesis resulting from a practical observation. In the unstable horizons of Youtube, a significant change resulted in 2017.

4.1.3 Youtube.com Creators Studio - the end of a participatory affair

In the [Youtube Creator Blog](#), an official blog of Youtube team and decision-makers, it was announced in 2017, August, the following changes with the title “[A New Youtube look that works for you](#)” with the following explanation by Susan Wojcicki, YouTube.com CEO:

“When YouTube launched 12 years ago, it was a single website that supported one video format, 320x240 at 4:3 aspect ratio. Fast forward to today and YouTube lets you watch any combination of SD, HD, 4K, 360, 3-D, and live video on nearly every device with an internet connection – from desktops to phones, tablets to TVs, game consoles, and even VR headsets. We have also introduced apps and services that give you new ways to watch and get even closer to the content and creators you love. Music fans, gamers, and TV lovers each have unique experiences specifically tailored for their favourite content with [YouTube Music](#), [YouTube Gaming](#) and [YouTube TV](#). For families looking for the best way to watch together, we launched the [YouTube Kids](#) app. Moreover, for fans who want an uninterrupted, ad-free experience, and exclusive original content from creators, there is the [YouTube Red](#) membership. To put it simply, YouTube’s evolved ... a lot. And we’re not even close to done. Over the last few months, we have started releasing updates and will continue to throughout the rest of the year. When all is said and done, we will bring a new level of functionality and a more consistent look across our desktop and mobile experiences. We know this is a lot of change, but we want to make clear that there is one thing that stays the same: YouTube’s mission. We are here to give people a voice and show them the world – no matter what device they use”(Wojcicki, 2017).

This excerpt, part of Youtube official blog, where superior company responsible write and inform about their business politics news, is clear about an understanding of participatory culture within Youtube technological and commercial strategy, the most comprehensive range of possible formats and filming devices covered. The focus is in the facility to access contents, instead, for example, on editing possibilities of the platform, as a form of expression or investment in digital literacy as diversity catalyst.

Despite, the exact notion of such role and importance of the platform in social movements and digital culture, as confirmed in another excerpt from the CEO, Susan Wojcicki writes in the official blog in April 2017:

“As the CEO of YouTube, I have seen how our open platform has been a force for creativity, learning and access to information. I have seen how activists have used it to advocate for social change, mobilize protests, and document war crimes. I have seen how it serves as both an entertainment destination and a video library for the world. I have seen how it has expanded economic opportunity, allowing small businesses to market and sell their goods across borders. And I have seen how it has helped enlighten my children, giving them a bigger, broader understanding of our world and the billions who inhabit it.”(Wojcicki, 2017)⁸¹

However, the attacks to the platform, although all control tools installed, have transformed one prominent feature of the platform. The capacity not only to upload and share contents globally for free with a comfortable amount of space but rather a capacity to edit and create or recreate the videos in the platform. A characteristic of “remix culture”, considered part of “participatory culture” equation.

The extinction of Youtube.com’s Creators Studio, where non-professional video editor software was available, is a crucial signal of the narrowing meaning of participatory culture and user content creation, effectively. The end of such software features announced in June 2017, some ideas about what was the corporation investment points shared in business language, but any explanation about what were the detail changes, and a vague toolset of innovative features presentation was launched. It all became diffuse and not clear about the end of Creator Studio and the rise of Youtube Studio. The blog entry of June 2017 explains it like this:

“Sneak peek at YouTube Studio Beta. Many of you use YouTube Creator Studio on the desktop to help manage your channel. And while the current site has some useful tools (that will not be going anywhere), we have decided it is time to rebuild Creator Studio from the ground up. The new experience will be called YouTube Studio (easier, right?). It is going to be awesome, and we hope you will help us make it even awesome-r by joining our beta. The overall plan with YouTube Studio is to let you do more in less time. The design will be refined (like... a lot), and we will add a number of new features that creators have already been asking for. A smart inbox that houses personalized suggestions for engaging with fans,

⁸¹ “Expanding our work against the abuse of our platform”, by *Susan Wojcicki, CEO of YouTube* <https://youtube.googleblog.com/2017/12/expanding-our-work-against-abuse-of-our.html>, last accessed March 2020

collaborating with creators and more is only one of a series of features we are working on. And we are going to need your help to make them better! ”(Wojcicki, 2017)⁸²

In late 2017, Youtube ended its possibilities to creators directly use its editing tool to produce and re-edit their videos, an essential feature of remix culture of the mid-2000s, as expressed by Lessig⁸³, where visual and audio samples were part of such a mash-up community. Features of Creator Studio were very close to an editing table. Cutting clips, visual effects, like fades, in and out, to and from black, using colour corrections, filter options and image configurations like saturation, sharpness, contrast, were all part of an integrated editing logic of the users. That was a crucial part of a certain way of creating and “participating” in the platform. Also Youtube.com, within their interpretation of “fair use” politics, was a significant incentive to all kind of experimental videos. Hence a laboratory for commercial logics of the platform itself - and if a historical account of “viral video” is made, exploratory space of creation of Youtube was diverse and part of a formula for such phenomena, but leaving a large amplitude of action to those pioneers of what is now a well-cut figure, the *tuber*. Another set of changes in Youtube.com were all its paratextual functions, where a pleiad of textual and still information could be added and exist with the moving image. Legend, insertions, boxes were all removed from the data system of the edition of the videos.

At the present moment, a complex system of control of Youtube aesthetics as an insertion box of an URL, with a specific visual set, leaving thinner margins for another kind of creative appropriation, as before, where a box to insert written information or images was customizable, and it could be chosen the box colour, its size and a small range of shapes. Edition possibilities are at the moment invested in musical rights possibilities, what reminds early ambitions of the platform, of business strategy aligned with music labels, that were Youtube business targets, before the input of millions of users and billions of visualizations as ads became primary income.

The importance of montage, a political montage of social movements as seen in Hito Steyerl text, “The Articulation of Protest”(2002) is essential to understand partly, beyond the economics of Youtube presence as host of new trends in popular culture, how it was a significant partner in a montage of the political potential of digital visual culture. As Hito Steyerl

⁸² <https://youtube-creators.googleblog.com/2017/06/> last accessed in March 2020.

⁸³ Lawrence Lessig “Remix, Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy”, 2008

writes, the organization of montage of collective movements is crucial to the movement politics itself, “Every articulation is a montage of various elements - voices, images, colours, passions or dogmas - within a certain period and with a certain expanse in space.”(Steyerl, 2002). An articulation presupposes the protest organization itself, and also at different levels, not only of symbolic and language but also at the expression level, meaning a workflow through Youtube.com platform as being an example edifice for such task - “In relation to protest, the question of articulation applies to the organization of its expression - but also the expression of its organization.”(Steyerl, 2002).

Even if the architecture of the site at that time, 2011, was not fully used in this extent, a remake and reuse gestures through editing software, sure was in the mindset of the creators, that somehow gave tools to activists as Weibel exhibited in 2014 and that Castells refer. All those projects, sites, activities like “We are all Madjid” for example, are part of such experience design for the participatory culture politics. The uses of the technological affordances within the platform expanded its emancipatory potential. The machine was an influential social machine, resistant and transforming from popular video entertainment of a kitten or Korean pop to Egyptian viral resistance or occupying slogans. In a practical perspective, one can exercise making an activist video to upload to an activist channel in Youtube.com.

In 2011 one individual could go to a demonstration, could film with his or her mobile phone some videos of that demonstration, and upload the raw material to his or her Youtube.com channel, and then within the platform, one could edit his or her material in the free non-professional editing software included in the platform. Within that editing software, a creator could cut, split, insert fade transitions, add legends, captions, boards, insert text directly on the images and use some of the most common strategies of a montage. Rewriting the moving image and expressing the montage, reorganizing his or her experience of that raw footage and expressing his or her protest and widely disseminate it in that global ground.

One of the final text's appendices in the book is Henry Jenkins “What Happened before Youtube” (in Burgess, Green, 2009, 2018) where the author’s argument about Youtube.com is that it only potentiated the community media already existing in differentiated forms. In his own words - “Much that is written about Youtube.com implies that the availability of Web 2.0 technologies has enabled the growth of participatory cultures” (Burgess, Green, 2009, p.109) but for this author - “the emergence of participatory cultures of all kinds paved the way for

the early embrace, quick adoption, and diverse use of such platforms.” (Burgess, Green, 2009, p.109)

Also a brief working flow and changes it happened in Youtube in the recent years, since 2017 when Creator Studio was dismantled, make rather impossible a developed activist or activist practices of use. The Youtube strategy has narrowed, investing perhaps after some analysis of its own workflow and its ranks of visualization, what was its best business strategies, and there was a clear choice on personalized channel creators but adopting the *vlogger model*, focusing of talking heads channels from several interests like gaming, music streaming, humour, DIY, among others. Youtube has refocused as a platform, with an investment in an “academy of creators”, offering the kind of tools and usability items adequate and available for such type of channels and users, accompanying the trends of the moment.

4.2 “La Survivance des Lucioles”

“Voir l’horizon, l’au-delà c’est ne pas voir les images que viennent nous effleurer. Les petites lucioles donnent forme et lueur à notre fragile immanence, les “féroces projecteurs” de la grande lumière dévorant toute forme et toute lueur - tout différence dans la transcendance des fins dernières. Accorder son attention exclusive à l’horizon, c’est se rendre incapable de regarder la moindre image”.

Georges Didi-Huberman, “Survivance des Lucioles”, Les Éditions du Minuit, 2009

The gesture here is to retrieve the eco-media metaphor of precarious digital images that Georges Didi-Huberman defined in “La Survivance des Lucioles” (2009) - the survival of the fireflies - that preceded the series “L’Oeil de L’Histoire”(Éditions de Minuit, 2009-2016). In this book, the author proposes a methodological gesture to organize a meaning for a constellation of traces. The author reenacts a text by Pier Paolo Pasolini about its “disappearance” of the fireflies. These *fireflies*, in an ecological image, and a discussion of its survival, rather than its disappearance is a reflection upon Pasolini’s article also known as the “article of the Fireflies”, written in February 1975, present in the compilation “Corsaire Writings”(1975). An article published in Corriere Della Sera under the title “The Vacuum of Power in Italy”, a discontent Pasolini discussed the apathy of the people under the transition

of the “fascist fascism” to the “Christian Democratic fascism”. In the decades after-war, Pasolini compares with two different phases in the allegory of the fireflies, one - “during the early 1960s, due to air pollution and, especially in the countryside, water pollution (of the rivers and the lakes), the fireflies began to disappear. The phenomenon was explosive and riveting. After a few years, the fireflies were gone”.

According to Pasolini, the first phase of this phenomenon happens before the disappearance of the “fireflies”, and reports to the ten years after the end of the war. The second phase, when the fireflies had already disappeared coincided with a phase, under a post-industrial time, that Pasolini considered - “the coercive ways of the power of consumerism transform and distort the consciousness of the Italian people, to the point of irreversible degradation”. At this chapter, following Didi-Huberman, instead of Pasolini’s pessimism, meshing into a unique *mass image* the volume of teras of Youtube.com protest images will essay a genealogical gesture attempted from a selection of videos that are *wandering* in the platform. The fireflies, also the digital ones, are a metaphor of “l’improbable et minuscule splendeur des lucioles - (...) - ne métaphorise rien d’autre que l’humanité par excellence, l’humanité réduite à sa plus simple puissance de nous faire signe dans la nuit.” (Didi-Huberman, 2009, p.25).

Thus, regarding Walter Benjamin argument, a political critique can be found in appearances - “l’exposition réciproque des peuples et des pouvoirs. La crise des démocraties peut se comprendre comme une crise des conditions d’exposition de l’homme politique”, wrote Benjamin in “The Work of Art in the Era of its Technical Reproducibility”(1936), in Didi-Huberman quotation, (op.cit.p.29). These fireflies, fragments of genealogies inhabit *other spaces* - “fût-il interstitiel, intermittent, nomade, improbablement situé - des ouvertures, des possibles, des lueurs, des malgré tout”. (Didi-Huberman, 2009, p.36).

Social movements images, images made by individuals in uprising moments also reflect le *image dialectique* of Walter Benjamin, images that somehow also reflect “de quelle façon le temps se font visibles, comment l’histoire même nous apparaît en un éclair passager qu’il faut nommer “image”(Didi-Huberman, 2009, p.38). In face of this presence and appearance, Didi-Huberman proposes a survival, and therefore, a gesture of appearance. A gesture that combines from Aby Warburg - “le rôle constitutif des survivances dans la dynamique même de l’imagination occidentale, mais encore les fonctions politiques dont leurs agencements mémoriels s’y révèlent porteurs” (Didi-Huberman, 2009, p.52)

To address the question of a politic of survivals, or rather, in Giorgio Agamben reading in “Le Temps Qui Reste”, “la puissance des survivances” (Didi-Huberman italics), a reference to Benjamin returns, image as “lisibilité du temps” and “maintenant de sa connaissance” (Didi-Huberman, 2009, p.72). Nevertheless, what embodies this image? Under this framework, images embody their fragile condition, their intermittence, their accidental happening and appearances. As visual fragments that compose the heterogeneous space of digital culture. As the “poor images” Steyerl described, the copies, the remnants, visual lumpenproletariat.

Transposed to such a space as Youtube.com, digital visual fireflies, are not disappearing, they are perhaps invisible behind, not spotlights, as referred by Didi-Huberman, but instead on the surface of the interface. Its software ideology, where the number of visualizations or suggested videos, powerful features of Youtube create a *flow of visibility* that is mostly self-contained, and where videos precipitate into another, creating a continuous flow. Part of a software workflow design that somehow recreates some notions of audiovisual flow resonating neo television conceptions of Umberto Eco with a focus on the spectator continuity, a “continuous flow of images” that induces in actuality to the well-known slogan “broadcast yourself”.

4.3 Youtube.com Fireflies

This section refers to a corpus of films that assume an interpretation of this definition of “digital fireflies”, which also implies a poetic choice of films, amid such “actuality garbage bin” (Thomas Hirschhorn expression), as Youtube.com, to collect and make the appearance of a possible community of *digital fireflies*. A filmic analysis as a close reading of the methodology proposed by Manuela Penafria in “Análise de Filmes - conceitos e metodologias” (2009), proceeding to an analysis that both decompose and interprets the films. Even if assuming as Penafria, that does not exist a consensual methodology, also in Aumont (1999) attempt essays both a focus on the characteristics of films, but also on other elements that show up from the multimedia environment, becoming multimodal elements of analysis. In one hand the films, in a strict film analysis, duration, plans, scales, colour, and another layer of discourse, a *dialogue that occurs in the platform* in several modes - channel titles and des-

criptions, number of visualisations, likes and dislikes, and commentaries. All part of a film dynamic that happens from the interface. Reading each movement happens from an integrated perspective of the community of videos debating a political space of each.

The analysis follows the chronology of the movements and points to some singularities and particular videos. An overview is possible from a collection of videos in playlists, where all the videos from the collections are organised under social movements order. First, ArabSprings⁸⁴, second Movimento12M⁸⁵, next “democracia real ya.”⁸⁶ and “OccupyWS.”⁸⁷

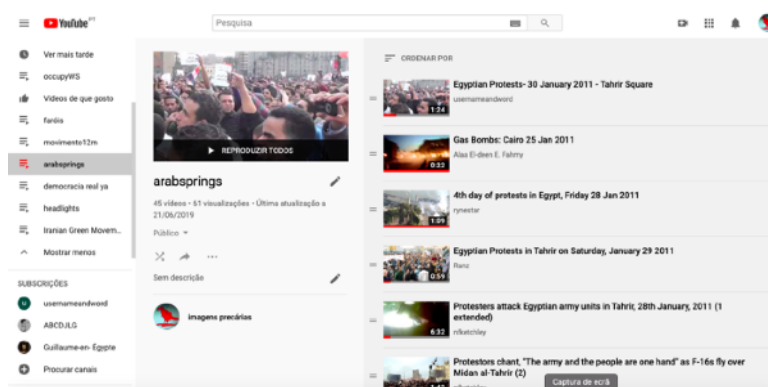


image 11 - “#Arab Spring” playlist in “precarious images” Youtube.com channel

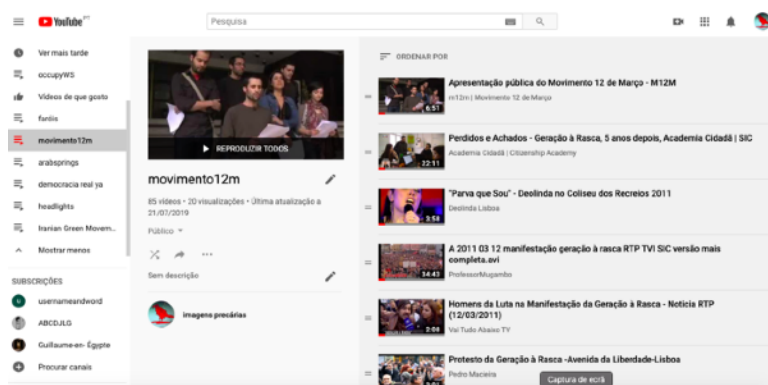


image 12 - “#Movimento12M” playlist in “precarious images” Youtube.com channel

⁸⁴ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbNeuB_Z4378HZ_NGTIuF2LwtrDlwfdRV

⁸⁵ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbNeuB_Z4378Eg1uM6qSbAwZxs2CcSfFk

⁸⁶ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbNeuB_Z437-wPnU1LuI99rZS-4dH769e

⁸⁷ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbNeuB_Z437-UC5RfCqEm-kfuFrYZKXc

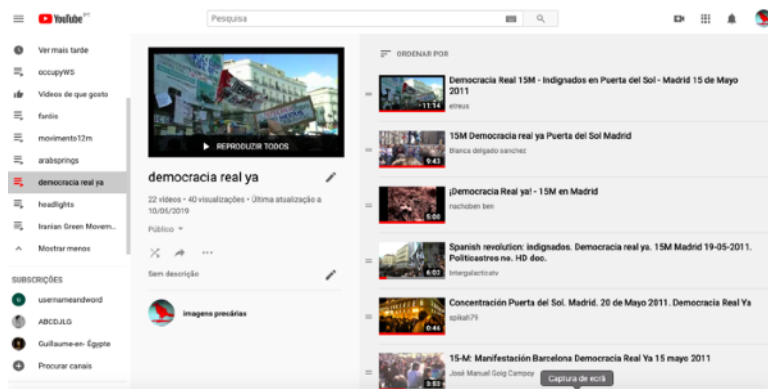


image 13 - “#15MMadrid” playlist in “precarious images” Youtube.com channel

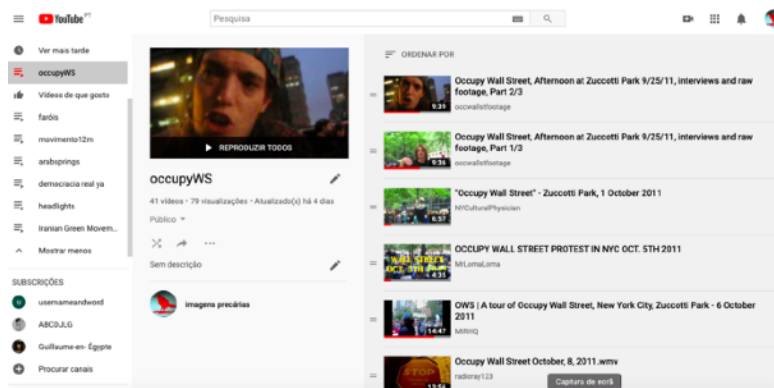


image 14 - “#OccupyWS” playlist in “precarious images” Youtube.com channel

4.3.1 #Arab Springs, the initial shape

The first set of films taken here, belong to “Arab Springs” movements and are all related to the early events at the beginning of 2011. Individual videos or channels are identified, and its references are linked directly with the videos. The first images that draw the attention were from a small account on Youtube with not many videos, nor visualisations. The channel is called **usernameandword**, and it is an individual channel with only around 12 videos, that belong all to captured images during demonstrations and uprising moments in Egypt in January 2011.

In a first glance, one of thing that drew the attention was the factual title of the first video I saw “[Egyptian Protests- January 30 2011- Tahrir Square](#)”. The people in the video turn to the camera, talk with it, show posters to the camera. The presence of cameras, as companions or witnesses of emotional uprising too, was part of a performance of indignation. The next element that considered were the plans in the sequence. First, it starts with a rhythm of a song, slogan of protest, the second with an older lady who leads the group, singing and

clapping, a slogan that can be perhaps, the description of the video: ***“Judgement and trial for the gang ruling Egyptian! OUT OUT OUT OUT! GET OUT!”***, and a panoramic image movement to the left, to discover the youngsters that were with her. The camera wanders, and then a gesture from one protester moves towards it. We can read in English ***“Out BARAK”*** in a poster with an image of a foot stepping people. The next encounter within this video is a moment when someone is photographed with a smile. And then an older lady sings, demanding with her hands for others to join the choir. The next plan is a reversal plan, or a crowd, more as a *prosthetic crowd*, with their image capturing devices, participating, witnessing and sharing these insurrectional words and moments. The crowd is immense, a young man is in the centre of the image, with his small mobile phone, cross-filming. The video has 541 visualisations, two likes (one is mine) and only two commentaries. The first: ***“Hosni start packing...”*** and second ***“We did not start the fire...”***.



image 15 - still frames from “Egyptian Protest- 30 January 2011 - Tahrir Square”(2011) by usernameandword



image 16 - composite of still frames from “Egyptian Protest- 30 January 2011 - Tahrir Square”(2011) by usernameandword

The next group of videos, also from the same channel, remind a tryptic, as a *night family*, and are somehow an opposition to daily moments of uprising energies. The video “[Re-volution - Egyptian Woman calling out January 29 2011](#)”, uploaded on January 31, 2011, is an exception of visualisations on this chart, once it has around 7.726 visualisations at the time of this writing. It has been seen, although not commented. The only commentary is “dakar!” by “rebelhair”, seven years ago. The interest of this video is its relative position in this political moment. First, this is a short video, a camera wondering in the night demonstration in a square until it focuses on the uprising energy of a woman, in the crowd, at someone’s shoulders. First, we can hear a cameraman talking and then, the camera stabilising and standing, attentive to body energy, to a discourse, fueling those among her. A woman wears a white scarf, light colours in the night, and that singles her figure, she is young, but not a youngster.

Like in a stage, she says a sentence and waits for its impact, and another, and another. One other detail of this short video is the poster on the right side of the screen. Once again the poster is in English, with big letters “**GET OUT!**”. This woman can be a motivator, empathising with assembly energy, mobilising others. A description of the video brings gravity to the moving image: “*Our protest is legitimate - against poverty and famine.*”



image 17 - still frames from “Revolution, Egyptian woman calling out 29 jan 2011”(2011) by username-andword,



image 18 - still frames from “Chanting leave for Mubarak. January 29 2011”(2011) by usernamandword

The second video is about a man, an elder one. This video is longer, has 2 min., with much lesser visualisations, 262 at the time of this writing. It also belongs to channel **userna-meandword**, and it was published on January 31, 2011, also. Its name is “[Chanting leave for Mubarak. January 29 2011](#)”. The video starts with a camera focus, the night lights and the crowd assures a raccord. After focusing w an establishing shot, a first plan sharps into a compassed clapping and chanting, from the point of view of the crowd. Then a second plan. Again a focusing camera, almost like an attention effect.

A man comes into the image centre and what is most striking is how close the camera zooms, and we get a face. The plan gets close. The camera wants to hear and see this man, and he is standing in someone’s shoulders, supported by some hands in the crowd. The camera zooms again. The movements of this older man, although firm, are calm. The man reads from cardboard. His discourse is slow; his words to the crowd were pondered, written and read, not spontaneous. What he has to say was intentional and was filmed to be sent to other spaces, hypothetical viewers and listeners around the world. He turns left and right, to reach the crowd with his words. The crowd sings back his words. And then they continue, the group goes on the move. Cars honk to pass by, again and again. Here, the honks show that the uprising in the streets has not yet requested the rest of city life or the square, and the crowd is still not one, unisonous. The sound of the honks stay, and the crowd disperses. The older man moves on someone’s shoulders, and the camera goes with him through the crowd until the next stop, where he starts the same chant. After a little damaged, a small poster, again in English, can be read. It says “**GAME OVER**”. The Youtube’s description of the video is clear:

“Some of what is chanted:

We are sleeping here in Tahrir.

Son of our country why are you afraid, they sold our country and what is left.

They killed our children and what is left.

Mubarak, Suleyman - To Saudi Arabia, You go as well.

A revolution of the young, against all the thieves”.

This video has zero comments on the site. The man is dressed in light colours, with a white shirt and a Palestinian scarf, with a light brown jacket. He was a light figure in a night and a crowd of dark colours.

The third video of this set is called “[Egypt- Keeping protest grounds clean January 29 2011](#)”. This is a detail video into a possible set of videos published by this channel, **usernameandword**, where an observational point of view of side details balance with a more political focused camera. Although the video is small and dark, it is just relevant a gesture, where we can attain to the detail of a woman and a child, almost an adolescent, who are picking up off the floor small pieces of garbage, that the crowd left behind. The camera discovers this gesture, made by the child first, a smaller figure, bending and grabbing things off the floor. Then a woman, also, with a black garbage bag. Furthermore, the camera retains the spontaneity of this act. The parallel gesture that nurtured revolutions, uprisings, maintained barricades. This is the time for a moment of visibility of women and children in resistance visual History, gendered lives and minor gestures that brought water, food, clothes, medicaments, washing, cooking and cleaning the streets on fight⁸⁸Still, in the digital vague of protest imagery, there is a place for such image. The boy and the woman, “keeping protest ground clean”. This video has zero comments and 341 visualisations, with six likes. No comments and no description.

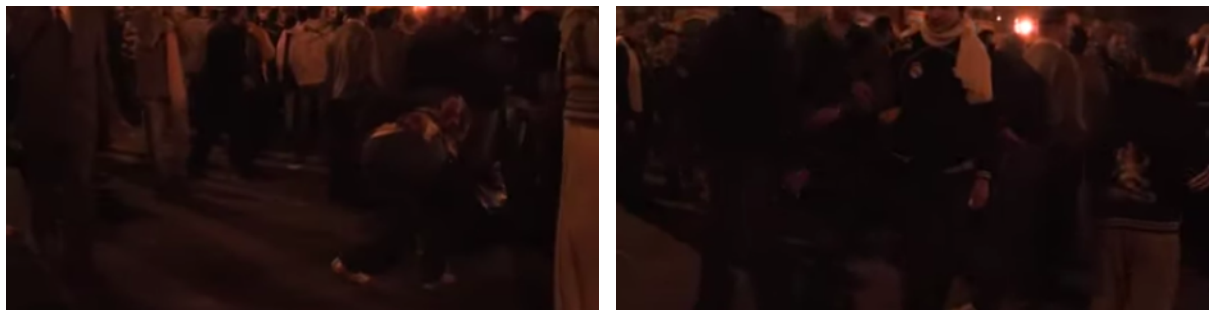


image 19 - composite of still frames from “Egypt - Keeping Protest Grounds clean 29 jan 2011”(2011) by usernameandword

In “[Egyptian Protests - Raising what citizens ask for Tahrir - Cairo January 31 2011](#)”, a thumbnail of the video in Youtube.com is a large poster, that occupies the entire screen. A poster had to be raised by several men, while others supported and chanted in a protesting chorus, perhaps some of the words written on the poster, this time is written in Arab. Whistles also among the chants and some words until a unison choir of protest. Those who raised the giant poster stand with it as a flagship, on the first plan a small English poster, “GET OUT”,

⁸⁸ These images remind the "typage" of “soldaderas” figures in Sergei Eisenstein “Que Viva México”(1932), women who are a presence in the film is a mix of subaltern and sensuous authority.

it says, again. A protest with simultaneous translation to the world. The raising of such posters in these kinds of videos is not a singular action, but a repetitive one. Instead, it is part of a set of uprising videos, where occupation and group performance in public space have at the same time, part of individual courage and defiance but also a sense of collective and global action. This video has 124 visualisations, no description and no comments.



image 20 - still frames from “Egyptian Protests - Raising what citizens ask for Tahrir - Cairo 31st january 2011”(2011) by usernameandword

Another video is a sequence of movement, a travelling of an occupation or a movement to the protest square. The video, “[Checking IDs- Egypt's Revolution- Tahrir- Cairo. January 31 2011](#)” starts with a green iron fence, and the camera’s point of view is frontal to those who pass the fence and continue their march towards the square. This time the camera follows the people on the move, a walking camera, a travelling. The plans of this video remind a circular temporality, hence there are several plans, they do not start or end, there is instead a *continuous moment*, a continuous-time, as Furio Jesi described. In this video, there is a sense of a travelling without a direction, like a perpetual movement. These images give a sense almost a category, of uprisings camera movements. The description is “**Tahrir January 31 2011- Walking towards Tahrir Square Around 12:30. Citizens asked by a few good men to show their IDs to weed out "those planted within us.**

Further along, video blankets carried in for those staying overnight in Tahrir square”. The description is relevant to action organisation, as the reference to the blankets distributions. It had one comment and 640 visualisations.



image 21 - still frames from “Checking IDs - Egypt’s Revolution- Tahrir, Cairo. January 31st 2011, by usernameandword, 2011



image 22 - still frames from “Checking IDs - Egypt’s Revolution- Tahrir, Cairo. January 31st 2011, by usernameandword, 2011

From social movements of that year, Egyptian “Arab spring” is probably one of the most documented in moving images. There are many videos of important moments of protest, vigil nights in Tahrir Square, some borrowed from professional broadcaster imagery of the square’s historical events, as an example of Al-Jazeera direct news, that shared with comments by some individual channels. Other moments, within such plurality of videos, are daily demonstrations, as the scenes with water jets confrontations in the bridge.

There is an immense quantity of videos on Youtube.com of those days filmed as accidental videos. Cairo city was not the only ground for Egyptian cameras, but also for some tourists that made and uploaded to Youtube.com their point of view of what was happening, as consubstantiation of expanded public space, also a subsequent “*global testimony*”. Those videos participate in an online citizenship with no geographical limitations. A transversal presence and diversified participation in events, filmed and uploaded. Some videos have these characteristics. There are some examples of videos made by accidental witnesses of those days in Egypt or Tunisia. Tourists that happened to be in Cairo, or Tunes and assuming the importance of the historical events they were living, chose to be witnesses, to be part of the process.

Examples are videos from **rynestar**. Images with a voice-over explaining the situations, taken from rooftop hotels or street cabs. Titles are chronological “5th day of protests in Egypt, January 28 2011” and “4th day of protests in Egypt, January 29 2011”. Descriptions are **“Ministry building next to the Egyptian Museum being burnt”** and **“Roughly around one minute, and you can see one brave Egyptian picking up a tear gas and throwing it back at the police. It is amazing because I am on the 8th floor far away, and my throat is closing up from the tear gas.”**, respectively. The first video is just a 7 seconds glance, with 179 visualisations and the second 479 visualisations, and no comments.



image 23 - still frames from “5th day of protests in Egypt, 28 jan 2011” and “4th day of protests, 29 jan 2011”, by rynestar, 2011

Thus Youtube.com apparatus enables global multimedia strategies. This can describe a political experience of global citizenship in networked societies and hybrid public space with a deterritorialised sense of belonging to historical events beyond territorial notions, at least as active testimonies of them. Some videos are examples that were shot and shared in personal Youtube channels, but also some tourists created a channel for the singular moment they were living.

The **Tunisian case** of the *martyr image* in “Arab springs” is most known in its global dimension once it functioned as a trigger to some events that happened after, and has also been, in a way, a primary link to the relevance of digital sphere in the hybridisation of virtual spaces and assembly squares. As political facts and events. Such was the case of Mohamed Bouazizi, who was a “Tunisian street vendor whose self-immolation after being harassed by municipal officials catalysed the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia and helped inspire a wider

pro-democracy protest movement in the Middle East and North Africa.”⁸⁹. Unfortunately, it is also, partly because of these videos shared in Youtube.com, that uprising waves became viral. Videos of his self-immolation were widely disseminated and viewed.

Although the symbolic justice, the taste of sadness and the martyr’s sense are present in several videos on Youtube. A search with his name, several videos appear with a scale of visualisations that goes to 1,3 thousand. The videos that appear start with comments of Channel 4, the Aljazeera news, but also former U.S. President Barack Obama speech about this, the title of the video, "[Obama honours the hero of Tunisia, Mohamed Bouazizi](#)" (25133 visualisations) on the channel of Daily Conversations. And then, some other reportages from AFP, Associated Press, Euronews, CNN, Tunisia Live. This first search shows how the importance of this story and gesture, that have become global and part of mediatised History.

Besides the martyr gesture, Tunisian videos are not so disseminated and prolific as Egyptian ones. Also contributes the fact that some artists and video collectives were in Egyptian terrain since the beginning, working within the “revolutionary image” of the events, as some earlier referred projects testify. Despite such conditions, there are some singularities, solitary gestures among many of the riots and police attacks. One video shows a speech “[rajel corajeux de tunisie.mp4](#)” and “[Tunisia Revolution 2011](#)”.

The videos are about individuals that despite the conditions liberated their words and expressed visually free impressions. The first, one man standing and speaking. The other, filmed from a balcony, in the night, with the comments of women crying and saying “he is courageous”. There are also some reactions from other balconies. It is an emotional video, with a higher number of visualisations, and several commentaries, from where this one was selected “*Bravo pour nos frères tunisiens, vous nous avez honoré, chaque fois que je vois cette vidéo j’ai les larmes aux yeux Merci infiniment aux tunisiens*”. These two videos illuminate the conception of digital fireflies.

⁸⁹ Britannica Encyclopedia <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Mohamed-Bouazizi> What strikes when thinking of Bouazizi’s gesture is that he lived almost his entire life under Ben Ali regime, he was only three years old when Ben Ali initiated his government. It was with his death that a new movement precipitated the regime’s end.



image A4 - still frames from “Tunisia Revolution 2011” and “rajel corajeux de tunisie mp.4” (2011)

A relation between some artists and filmmakers with the Egyptian scene brought to the centre of academic production, especially in Media Studies and New Media the theme of the first “digital” revolutions, uploaded and shared into tweets, posts and video sharing. Some of the first interactive documentaries appeared on this theme, such as “18daysinegypt.com”. This was a project claiming the participatory and collective profile, interconnected with authors professional field connections with media, design and cinema. The two co-creators, Jigar Mehta and Yasmin Elayat, the first a “documentary filmmaker and journalist”, the second an “interaction designer” and “software developer”.

On the homepage of the site, we can read “You witnessed it, you recorded it, now let us write our country history”, inviting the viewers through - “YOUR STORY MATTERS: we all have stories to share. Learn how you can join the effort to document Egypt’s history”. The second approach - “PARTICIPATE: did you take photos or videos, or tweet and post to Facebook? Add your story for future generations to see”. These are significant interaction demands, and this i-docs project has been very referenced and has become a multimedia landmark of the conjuncture of digital “Arab springs” and activist scene. Also a funded project by Ford Foundation, Tribeca Film Institute and Sundance Film Institute.

Other multimedia activist projects to refer is “[Filming the Revolution](#)” by Alisa Lebow. This i-docs project is an interactive platform, supported by Stanford University Press. The author’s proposal is present in the synopsis: *“Times of revolution has always been fertile ground for new ideas and approaches to filmmaking. With that in mind, film scholar and practitioner Alisa Lebow went to Egypt in the aftermath of the 2011 revolution to talk to filmmakers about their practices, that may have changed as a result of their participation in*

these events. Interviewing over thirty filmmakers, artists, activists, and historians, this project creates a platform to think alongside the people making films in the thick of the unrest and afterwards."⁹⁰ A well claimed project by scholars like Patricia Zimmerman, for example, as "open-ended and counter-monumental". The site itself has a complex architecture, of projects, trajects and archives, where the paths are tailor-made for the user, that can even record his own traject. A spatial projection of dots, naming different criteria, *themes, people and projects* for example, "Nada Riyadh" or "Journalism vs Activism". The dot or subject becomes a graph linkage representation with which appears a list of connections, and some plans of filmmaker's interview and reflection on work processes. Navigation is complex but significantly deepened in imbrications of also complex filmmaking and revolutionary transformations of historical moments.

One other main protagonists of the Egyptian scene is Libyan-Egyptian artist Lara Baladi, a renowned multimedia artist, filmmaker, working in North American academic scene. Lara Baladi has been working in different multimedia artistic artefacts from this specific context. This artist has very complex and multilayered artistic responses to the "Egyptian revolution" theme. A site like <http://tahrirarchives.com/>, named Vox populi, organised with a subtitle "Archiving a Revolution in the Digital Age", is described as: "Vox Populi is an ongoing project by Lara Baladi, which includes a series of media initiatives, artworks, publications, an open-source timeline and portal into web-based archives of the 2011 Egyptian revolution and other global social movements."⁹¹ The set up is close to Alisa Lebow, non-linear archiving and experience of digital historical imagery of "revolutionary" moments. The proposal splits into a **timeline**, described as - "a web-based participatory timeline of the 2011 Egyptian revolution and its aftermath. Positioned at the intersection of digital archives, innovative forms of interactive documentary and contemporary art, this online platform is at once an artwork—a 'transmedia' collage—and an open-source portal into archives related to Tahrir Square and many more global social movements."⁹² Work outcomes have a [presentation animation](#), various **installations**, present in several biennials and exhibitions, also **sculptures**, **media initia-**

⁹⁰ In "<https://filmingrevolution.org/>", accessed last time March 2020.

⁹¹ from the site "<http://tahrirarchives.com/>" last time accessed in March 2020.

⁹² from the site "<http://tahrirarchives.com/timeline>" last accessed in March 2020.

tives and events. All works of Lara Baladi on the theme explored in the site, with several images of sculptures, graphics and timeline animations.

On a multimedia perspective, one particular presentation of an infographic of a timeline made like an archive representation of [Tahrir Archives](#), a collaboration with [Ibraaz](#)⁹³ is part of Vox Populi project. Configuring a chronological timeline that assumes a protagonist role of organising dispersed media types and content, and expanding a temporality of protests, or resistance, to a more prolonged time, from 2011 to actual moment. One particular *media initiative* was the integration in protest action space of contributions from cinema projections, as political action, hence many people were filming and sharing their own images. “**Tahrir Cinema**” has been a landmark of univocal strength of discourse on political cinema and political action, gathering those who were protesting and filming, watching and interiorising their own images and embodying a meta-revolution brought by cinematic means.

Lara Baladi explains this event as a need for images in the space of revolutionary action - “During the summer-2011 Tahrir sit-in, there was much screaming and shouting into microphones on stage. Diffuse information floated about but with no focus. In all this noise, I felt a strong need for imagery in the square.”⁹⁴ From this, the artist organised screenings with several collectives. This initiative, named “a pop-up cinema”, was the result of a hands-on fabrication of a screen with borrowed equipment to start the projections. A significant achievement, as also conscious of the communication exchange of such gesture “Together we organised, in Tahrir, day by day, the program and the screenings. It was an immediate success. We showed, shared, and exchanged films on the revolution, recalling and reflecting on the events unfolding since January.”⁹⁵

Another landmark of “Arab springs” in activist mediascape, very close to the Egyptian scene is [“mosireen collective”](#). The site is clear and straightforward, it is an archive of independent imagery filmed during the protests in the Egyptian context. Its subtitle is “*an archive of resistance*”. The site is bilingual, attuned with a majority of images of these events. The organisation is simple, a direct entry to the films, with few tabs, “enter the archive”, “what is this?”, a “tutorial” video to use it and a “contact us” last link. “what is this?” is an open ma-

⁹³ an artistic middle east online platform. <https://www.ibraaz.org/>, last accessed March 2020

⁹⁴ from the site “<http://tahrirarchives.com/what-we-do>, last accessed in March 2020

⁹⁵ from the site “<http://tahrirarchives.com/what-we-do>”, last accessed in March 2020

nifesto about intentions and methodologies of the collective, along with a chronological explanation of events, and group action in them. It starts with questions of media control by the regime in 2011, what led the collective to create a Media tent to gather those who were participating, filming and protesting: “In the first days of the uprising a Media Tent was established in Tahrir Square. Hundreds of videos collected from dozens of people, men and women, young and old, who had filmed key events on their cameras and cell phones and wanted to contribute to the digital memory of the moment(...).”⁹⁶

As a collective, as a point of departure and mode of production, also the discourse is clear: “The Mosireen Collective came together in early 2011, its members were a part of the protest movement. We filmed and collected footage from across Egypt, in factories, hospitals, unions and morgues. We held training in street media in Cairo and across the country. In our workspace, we hosted events, discussions and film screenings. We were not neutral observers, but actors within a wider struggle. We participated and documented at the same time. We were engaged in a battle of narratives.”⁹⁷

The images were already circulating, videos edited and uploaded by the collective to Youtube, but many videos were “raw, unedited footage shot and gathered over the years”. The goal was - “On launching, the archive has 858 hours of indexed, time-stamped video material along with thousands more photographs and documents. All together they present thousands of histories of revolt told from hundreds of perspectives.”⁹⁸

The importance of the “Arab spring” images can be resumed that they are the igniters of what follows. In this sense go the words of Dork Zabunyan in his volume: “L’Insistance des Luttes - Images soulèvements contre-révolutions” (De l’incidence éditeur, 2016). His introduction starts with an argument about political images of uprising - “Les images d’une lutte prises dans le présent de son déroulé engageant aussi bien un avenir des luttes (...) Ils le font aussi pour transmettre quelque chose d’une vie qui se transforme et s’émancipe au jour le jour, mais dont l’effectuation est elle même précaire et indéterminée. La difficulté d’une tâche de libération collective, (...), font que ses protagonistes se rapportent aussi à des luttes à venir, aux contours et aux formes évidemment flous.”(from the Introduction).

⁹⁶ from the site “<https://858.ma/>” last accessed in March 2020

⁹⁷ from the site “<https://858.ma/>” las accessed in March 2020

⁹⁸ from the site “<https://858.ma/>” las accessed in March 2020

This conception of uprising images is close to a definition of “*luciole*” as image, close to a political or dialectical image that Didi-Huberman recovers from Walter Benjamin argument - “L’image dialectique est une boule de feu qui franchit tout l’horizon du passé”- once it is at the same time the configuration of uprising itself, like previously referred *crystal*: “Le premier opérateur politique de protestation, de crise, de critique ou d’émancipation, doit être appelé image en tant que ce qui se révèle capable de franchir l’horizon des constructions totalitaires.” (Didi-Huberman, 2009, p.101). Images reorder memory and the chronology of the events: “Si, comme nous tentons d’en construire l’hypothèse après Warburg et Benjamin, l’image est un opérateur temporel de survivances - porteuse à ce titre d’une puissance politique relative à notre passé comme à notre “actualité intégrale”, donc à notre futur.” (Didi-Huberman, 2009 p.102).

This idea of a horizon and a temporality of future in the uprisings, their individuals and gestures can be the same as Furio Jesi theorised, but also as Michel Foucault, in “Inutile de se soulever?”⁹⁹, a reference to Zabunyan, where memories of uprisings are memories of futures, memories that fuel a perpetual dynamism of uprising. As Zabunyan writes about uprisings images: “une irréductibilité les enveloppe qui alimentera d’autres luttes, là-bas ou ailleurs, de la même manière que l’incarnation d’un champ du possible à un moment donné en inspire en puissance d’autres, y compris lorsque ce possible affronte le risque de sa propre fin” (p.8), or as Foucault in “Anti-Rétro” (Cahiers du Cinéma, 1979, p. 251-252) - “Les soulèvements appartiennent à l’histoire. Mais d’une certaine façon, ils lui échappent”. There is a direct connection to be made with the images of such movements themselves. “l’image d’un soulèvement n’as pas pour vocation première à montrer ses figures (...). Elle est davantage une force qui entre en résonance ou en conflit avec des multiples pouvoirs - politique, médiatique, militaire, etc. - dont elle menace la continuité.” This is one argument this research presents as an overall perception of arab springs youtube shared videos, interpreted here as *digital fireflies*.

Their precarious conditions of production are not only understandable on the quality of images. Also, the kind of plans, or the “poor image” aesthetics and circulation or its duration, discourse and montage - most of them do not have this. They transmit a precarious temporality of the uprising in its uncertainty. They visually materialise an argument to *potential*

⁹⁹ Foucault, Michel. "Inutile de se soulever?." *Le Monde* 11.12 (1979): 1-2.

action. These images are images movement, as a flow, a river, in most cases they consist in documents of peoples energy that ignite, or try to ignite, by words, chants, attempts of political changes. These videos evidenced here, others could be added, have common characteristics, movements of a perpetual uprising, steps towards continuous movements, people following those whose energy is at the frontline, chanting in the night or on someone's shoulders shouting against injustice.

This is part of why Arab Springs were a vanguard of social movements of 21st-century. Apart from political, social and economic context, just focusing on precarious images filmed and shared in Youtube.com. Arab Springs have created a visuality of these movements, an image of *digital resistance*, that is already inscribed in collective imaginary. Furthermore, that power, once as Zabunyan or Foucault, or Jesi wrote, to shape a constellation referred in these lines, can shape future actions and in this specific perspective, future images. Future images of resistance, creating a counter-image to the *mass image*, in Sean Cubitt terms. These images have also materialised concrete politics of "poor images" in Hito Steyerl sense. Moreover, have become one *singular plural*, becoming a *synthetic image of modern uprisings*, recognised globally - "*flou*", grained, on the move - shot with a mobile cell phone, by individuals and shared online, with their own discourse. Vernacular videos made with habitual new media.

This research argues that this collection of images can be recognised as *synecdochical imagery*, once they are recognised as a part and a collective. Their modes of production, anonymous authors on the streets, authors and producers of their own political image, "*partagent le sensible*" of History, but with certainty on the efficiency of digital networks workflow, online video sharing platforms, partners of the global distribution of their political expressions. Also a visual, digital, networked and multimodal one. Once the videos are part of a networked economy of insurrection experiences. Coming back to Dork Zabunyan arguments on "Arab springs" and image analysis - "l'image, dans ce contexte tourmenté, n'est pas simplement une instance de représentation qui renvoie de l'extérieur à l'événement qui survient; elle est une force de captation des énergies qui traversent les consciences et les corps en situation"(Zabunyan, 2016, p.9).

This paragraph reassures Peter Snowdon's concept in his thesis of "vernacular images", which carry out "l'énergie du peuple qui circule (...). Elles ne se limitent pas à "diffu-

ser” cette énergie: elles constituent la matière même d’un “processus” par lequel le peuple devient un “sujet collectif”(Zabunyan, 2016). Continuing Peter Snowden argument “ces images ont une “portée plus large” à une double niveau chronologique et géographique, au sens où l’urgence qui les anime et l’espèce de suspense temporel qu’elles ne sont pas exclusivement liées aux événements auxquels elles se rapportent”.(Zabunyan, 2016, p. 10-11) - “Un soulèvement est toujours le reflet déformé d’une autre, le miroir brisé d’une fracture passée ou à venir: chacun a sa manière d’insister, et l’images qu’on en possède ou dont nous pouvons faire usage (montage amateur, diaporama, film d’archive, fiction historique) doivent veiller à ne pas devenir omniscientes pour ne pas atténuer la singularité d’autres révoltes.” (Zabunyan, 2016, p.11)

Such argument is also a reference of Jacques Rancière perspective on the writing of History in his “Partage du Sensible” (2001), where a connection between the writing of singular History and histories, defending a collective space of common History and of those who “make History”, as a space of interconnection, where History is enunciated in its diversity as historical weft. These images of Arab spring uprisings “make history” or *facilitate it*, in the words of Dork Zabunyan: “favorisent une “passage de l’histoire” des mille moments qui en composent le devenir sismique. Ces images proposent des textures et des formats dont la variété est considérable et qu’il est inconcevable d’appréhender dans une totalité close” (Zabunyan, 2016, p.13).

The last video selected is one extreme example of 10 minutes length video, [Egyptian freedom revolution](#), an edited film, with credits for script and direction, but using several images from different uprisings, since the fall of Berlin’s Wall in 1989, the coup against Ceausescu or the fall of Czechoslovakia regime. It compares collective footage from Egyptian uprisings of streets and squares, and it shows an editing strategy - *the transference of the power of image creation from the tv news channels to the individuals on the streets* - there are images and a voice-over made of a pastiche of news and reporters. Final images, made among random individuals with their visual messages, in this case, posters with words like “dignity” or “freedom”, concentrate anonymous resistance, or anonymous producer, close to an activist definition, what brings back Peter Weibel’s definition of Activism. These conceptions embody an aesthetic as politics, where a need to give a visual texture to their historical, collective experience exists. Nor are relevant the resolution quality or distribution strategies

of these collectives. This argument focuses on diversity, as the biodiversity of fireflies, as relevant as the gravitation of different particles, heterogeneous fragments in ecosystems of on-line video platforms, from what also depends on its sedimentation as heterogeneous visuality that emerges.

This video has only 43 visualisations at the time it is seen and analysed in this research, eight years have passed. The channel, a personal one, once it has someone's name [Hos-sam Zaki](#), only has two uploaded videos, this short film and another footage from a demonstration, occurred on November 23 2011. What can mean that the channel creation and this particular video production are very intertwined, maybe its own purpose.

4.3.2 #a Portuguese Protest, songs for a Revolution

The Portuguese 2011 protest was a particular event. It introduced a social movement that would have repercussions in western countries, in European and North-American social contexts. It was one only event, a march, took place on 12th, March 2011. It was a “non-partidary, civil movement”. It was organised by four young adults, to whom precariousness conditions present in an overwhelming generational strand made, after the 2008 financial crisis, a national emergence. Through social media organisation, facebook mainly, a movement assumed a digital protest profile. As Manuel Castells described, in the Web and on the squares, people organised in “self-communication” and “global network” conditions.

In a Manifest of the 12th March Movement, the interconnection of two concepts can be interpreted. Precarious lives, evolving from labour conditions to more general perception, and a late-capitalist multitudinal formation. The events assumed *multiple placements*, meaning it took place in several cities in Portugal, and even in European cities with Portuguese immigration, at that moment an important topic for a population who was seeing their qualified youngsters immigrate.¹⁰⁰ Despite this fact a big demonstration took place in Lisbon and Oporto, that was an effort for a democratic and decentralised gesture of reproduction of a “*protest template*”, recognising an organisation of protest, political articulation and its digital culture design. A robust viral network buzz, an event proposal, reproducible in several points, distri-

¹⁰⁰This was also a hard parallel effect of the crisis in terms of collective memory, once Portuguese immigration had also high rates during the dictatorship, in the sixties and seventies, with lots of people forced to immigrate, mostly to Central European countries, like France, Germany and Switzerland. The reenactment of such ghosts to a higher-educated generation of the 2000s was a hard confrontation in 2011 crisis for Portuguese families.

buted upon a rhetoric of individual action and participatory culture, under a common social threat, precarious life. José Soeiro defended, in his article *“Da Geração à Rasca ao Que se Lixe a Troika. Portugal no novo ciclo internacional de protesto.”* (Soeiro, 2014), an idea that the conjecture was aligned with international trends. Moreover, the mobilising capacity of such generation also came from a sense of a *“global imagined community”*, where different countries experience contaminated and inspired each other. This is a relevant characteristic of the Portuguese protest. Its early response to a contemporary contestation configuration and an *“articulation”* of protest.

Another is a reactivation of a local inter-generational political collective memory. The streets of Lisbon were flooded with a seventies aesthetics, with a reenactment of *“protest song”* landscapes, identifying with 1974 Carnation Revolution and resistance culture, as a historical emancipatory original moment. The generation of baby boomers, born after the 25 April 1974, pivoted the organisation of such protests. Popular culture elements of the Portuguese Eurovision contestant folk group named *“Homens da Luta”*, translated to *“Men of Struggle”*, were a crucial presence in demonstrations in Lisbon. The band, with their song *“A Luta é Alegria”*, something like *“The Struggle is Joy”* made a connection with protest song tradition in Portugal, close to resistance authors during the dictatorship, and part of a tradition of songwriters in Portugal, like José Afonso, José Mário Branco or Sérgio Godinho. These political songbooks from the seventies were part of a resistance lexicon, that ignited the demonstrations all over the place. From musical interventions in loco by some of these songwriters in the events, but also by a significant use made in Youtube videos, that people produced and shared, referencing this cultural universe.

This was the space, for example, for a *“New”* Protest Song as Paula Guerra defends in her article: *“The Song is Still a Weapon: Portuguese Identity in Times of Crisis”* (Guerra, 2019), defining protest song as - *“a musical universe linked to a song born in opposition to the fascist regime, and that therefore was transfigured as a sign of the April Revolution in Portugal”* (Guerra, 2017, p.1) as several musicologists defend. In Guerra’s definition, a universe for *“protest song”* has a precise contour: *“After the Carnation Revolution, the form of this song viewed as synonymous with resistance, revolution and social consciousness. It was during the revolutionary period that the protest song was mediated on a large scale, as evidenced through its massive presence on radio stations* (Guerra, 2010). As a musical universe,

the protest song has encompassed (and encompasses) a constellation of stylistic, aesthetic, contextual and ideological ingredients associated with folk music. The protest song can be found in various movements of musical, political and social expressions in Latin America through the "nueva cancion" and the "nueva trova" and in Brazil through "tropicalismo" (Castelo Branco, 2005). It also emerged in many countries of Southern Europe, particularly in Spain with "voces libres" and in France, through "nouvelle chanson" (Castro, 2012) This musical expression tends to manifest itself in diverse social configurations of criticism, discontent, political change, resistance, action and struggle" (Guerra, 2019, p.2). The reenactment of such universe was one overall presence and collective performance in place in Protest of "Geração à Rasca" on the 12 March 2011.

One evidence of this argument is an official video clip of the referred music "A Luta é Alegria" by the band "Homens da Luta", that is a collage video of footage mainly of Lisbon protest, where the band had a strong presence. Youtube.com video footage of the band follows a visual string of official clips of that music, with a montage of raw events and plans. There also exists a punctuation of plans, where some of original songwriters and singers from the seventies, were present, publicly singing in the demonstration, together on the caravan band, recognised as predecessors. The musical clip assumed characteristics of a protest, a festival of protest, not minoring its political potential of festival and feast in political struggles, like Bakhtin and Eisenstein.

Video fragments of Portuguese Protest in Youtube.com platform are part of this mashup, none of them is particularly cinematographic, or has political emergency as "Arab Springs". Nevertheless, at the same time, these videos reenact a political gesture as collective memory, through a specific kind of music. Videos wandering in the Youtube.com are more or less all connected with this idea of reconfiguring collective memory and its musical constitution.

The completeness of a first small film, "[Portugal Geração à Rasca 12 março 2011](#)" is its entire presence as a testimony of individual activism. The channel has the author's name, [Ana da Fonseca](#), which has eight subscribers, with four videos. Earliest video is that of 12th March demonstration, perhaps the channel started at that time, although the video was uploaded on 4 May of 2011, almost two months after. The channel defines itself as people and blogs, with no particular reference to activism. Despite this fact, the video is, on the one

hand, a photographic reportage of 12th March event, from a participator perspective. However, it is a composition in a "multimodal mode" that brings another kind of dynamic to it. The first element of such dynamic is the "authoritas" the Youtuber claims at the beginning of the video: first elements are her name as a director, photographer, editor, but is also relevant a dissonant note of rock music. Photographs are a succession of images from demonstrations, with a focus on the faces of the day, as the elements of the referred band "Homens da Luta", but also posters, as paratext, in Benjaminian terms are crucial to performativity and dialectics of message and image: spoken word, or the concretisation of a "street discourse" as part of a range of potentialities. "Italianos à rasca", or again confirmed the precariousness thematics, under variations using Portuguese expression "à rasca", reenacting an expression of an insecure social group, under an economical and political threat, a reference of Isabell Lorey *"State of Insecurity: The Government of Precarious"* (Lorey, 2016).



image 25 - still frames from "Portugal, geração à rasca, 12 março 2011" by Ana Fonseca, 2011

Although there are also some dissident images in itself, like the photography of two dogs, alone in the middle of a demonstration, or visibility for black participants, a not so common image assumed in generations of political resistance in Portuguese iconography. Nevertheless, also an appropriation of national symbols as flags or republican statue claims with a final image with red letters, appealing to indignation. As a multimedia object, the channel's paratext is a resume of a kind of synopsis of the event, with 138 visualisations and one like. A description text is a wrap up of a very pervasive social problem, precariousness. ***"Geração à Rasca", a movement that was born spontaneously and became more potent in the social networks (...)*** (my translation). Some few lines allude to precarious labour and social conditions, not only as a problem to those who were the "after-25th of April" generati-

on, born after 1974 but also youngsters and “the elders, who should have a retirement without any disturbance”.

The idea that *“insecurity will attack those who have a retirement, who have their own business and the fear of migration, as a final destitute solution to Portuguese social crisis”* (my translation). The text refers to historical demonstrations of the period after the Carnation Revolution narrative, as a metrics of participation, an original reference but also a metrics of success.

Around seventy videos were selected and analysed from this demonstration, according to with parameters previously defined: a low number of visualisations, individual channels that uploaded the videos, a close date of the upload to the event. From this set of films, a correspondence manifests - the relation with protest songs as an *ignitor*, is evident in the correlations, even from an intrinsic point of view of videos analysis and rhythm — some videos made with a montage of photographs with a musical soundtrack that corresponds to these universes. Several examples use contemporary musical themes, already referred, but also some kinds of music from “protest song” universe of the seventies. There are some titles added at the beginning of the videos, and some focus on written words and political slogans of protests.

Some videos with this structure are [Protesto da Geração à Rasca-Avenida da Liberdade-Lisboa](#), by Pedro Macieira, with 444 visualisations, and two comments uploaded on 13 March, the day after the demonstration. The description is very succinct “Protesto da Geração à Rasca em Lisboa, Av. da Liberdade em 12-03-2011” is identified under Youtube.com category of “news and politics”, with a licensed use of already mentioned, “A Luta é Alegria”, by Homens da Luta. Images were organised through a choice of numerous images of posters with slogans against precarity. Relevant correspondence is a moment when two images are used, a poster written in Arabic, and a second image, a Tunisian flag, in an apparent reference to Arab Springs. Again a clashing remix images from the seventies and present moment in “Homens da Luta” Caravan. Also, a remark on images of intergenerational presences, united in the event. Again some same icons, protest song, anti-precarity posters and national flags.

Videos converge in these representations, with some ideas extended and with a mix of musical choice as a soundtrack. A constant presence in these videos are protest songs, not only in the event when it occurred, but also as a chosen soundtrack to videos edited from still

images. There are some keystone kinds of music, the first already referred is “A Luta é Alegria” by Homens da Luta, a band with a strong presence in the demonstration, that at the moment gathered some songwriters and singers around their caravan, a testimonial piece in the videos.



image 26 - stills frame from “Protesto da Geração à Rasca - Av. da Liberdade - Lisboa” by Pedro Macieira, 2011



image 27 - stills frame from “Protesto da Geração à Rasca - Av. da Liberdade - Lisboa” by Pedro Macieira, 2011

“What a Fool I Am”(2011)¹⁰¹ by Deolinda, a Portuguese band, was a song that embodied a motto of the protests and is another crucial music to the chronology of the protest and to an interpretation of “protest song” reenactment theory. The song was performed some days before demonstrations in concert halls in Oporto and Lisbon and several videos of the interpretation moment of this song became viral, with a corresponding impact in traditional me-

¹⁰¹ The translation of the title and some verses here is the one used in the article “The Song Is Still a ‘Weapon’: The Portuguese Identity in Times of Crises. YOUNG. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1103308819829603>, by Guerra, P. (2019).

dia, once the public had a strong reaction to the song and a connection started to be made to the announced demonstration to happen, as a manifest song.

The song is about precarity and precarious labour conditions for young university graduates, repeating as the refrain “What a Fool I Am”, which in Guerra’s words is a benchmark “regarding the situation of precariousness and the difficulties that characterise the situation of young people in Portugal” (Guerra, 2017, op. cit. p.12), claiming about the exploitation of internships labour conditions. A translation of a passage of the song is of use for its understanding:

“Cause this is bad, and it is going to keep that way.

I am already lucky for training.

What a fool I am!

And I wonder,

What a fool world

Where to be a slave one must study.

I am from the generation ‘parent’s house.’

If I already have everything, why do I want more?

What a fool I am!

Children, husband, I am always delaying.

And I still have the car to pay,

What a fool I am!”

(Deolinda, 2011, in Guerra, 2019, p.12)

It was the first presentation of a new album and reaction to the song was spontaneous and powerful, within the context of a protest “to happen” that was already circulating in social and traditional media¹⁰², had under propitious conditions a mythical reception to the music at Coliseu do Porto, as a selected video shows - “[Deolinda - Parva que sou. Assim damos a volta a isto!](#)” This video, an amateur video recording in the concert, has 569 874 visualisations, 2.300 likes and 64 dislikes. The video was uploaded by an individual, Miguel Saúde, with a channel with no more than eighteen videos. The other videos are mostly videos of concerts, with a majority of Portuguese or Portuguese spoken bands. A fact is that this video

¹⁰² Facebook pages and events were duplicating fastly in several Portuguese cities or Portuguese communities, with thousands of likes and followers, creating a crescent wave of attention in those weeks to the organised protest.

was the first of this channel. Perhaps the channel began with the sharing of this unexpected reception to this song and the collective emotional experience in the concert hall. There are secondary videos about the event with several interviews on the impact of the song as a “[hymn to a generation](#)”. This news appeared in primetime television news, close to the protest date. The news based on Youtube video here referred announced the high impact it had until that moment. Also, an interview with a young unemployed, a comment on the need to protest on the street and some archival images of singer and composer José Afonso, an important figure of the protest song in Portugal, made the news piece.

More than the video, the comments, around 538, are a testimony of critical discourses around this event. One remark is also the longevity of the debate that Youtube.com interface allows. For example, first comments dated eight years ago, when the event took place - the comments do not have an insertion date, just a temporal reference of how long ago they were inserted.



image 28 - stills frames from “Deolinda, Parva que sou, Coliseu do Porto - Assim damos a volta a isto!” by Miguel Saúde, 2011

The two first were the lyrics of the song, but then a cascade of mobilisation to the near events starts. For example, one of the most relevant comments was the one made by João Labrincha, one of the 12M Movement organisers. His comment as a reaction to another comment is most significant of how the event was organised. And of the reception of the mu-

sic, along with the collective memory, such musical narrative triggers. This is the following sequence of comments:

The first comment is by Helder Gomes:

“Porra, finalmente! A música emblemática de uma nova revolução! Porque se “És da geração eu-já-não-posso-mais-Que-esta-situação-dura-há-tempo-de-mais!e parva não és” Do que é que estamos há espera? Troquem contatos! Manifestem-se! Qual o dia em que vamos sair para a rua? Porque se não fizermos nada, não somos parvos, somos cobardes!”

The comment is something like “At last. The symbolic music of a new revolution”. Hence you belong to this generation “*I-can-take-it-any-more-and-fool-you-are-not*”, it was supposed to do something, change contacts, go to the street. Otherwise, it is cowardice”. Furthermore, to this comment, a mobilisation quickly answers, by one of the Movimento 12M leaders, João Labrincha. This was one of the mediatic four youngsters that started the protest, a protest also with a robust social media communication strategy component that started with a famous video presentation. His comment in the video is clear about the process itself:

“Protesto da Geração À Rasca - 12 de Março - Av. da Liberdade, Lisboa

Protesto apartidário, laico e pacífico.

- Pelo direito ao emprego!

- Pela melhoria das condições de trabalho e o fim da precariedade!

- Pelo reconhecimento das qualificações, espelhado em salários e contratos justos!

Porque não queremos ser todos obrigados a emigrar, arrastando o país para uma maior crise económica e social!

(Procura no facebook por "Protesto da Geração À Rasca" e adere)”

The comment of João Labrincha is a mobilisation text to the Protest demonstration, starting with information about when and where, explaining the non-partidary, non-religious and pacifist nature of the protest, and their motives: labour conditions, the end of precarity life conditions, the recognition of qualifications with correspondent wages and labour security and contracts. The last claim is against the danger of immigration, a severe worry at those days of crisis, as seen before.

The video itself is amateur footage of the song, but as rare footage, the presence of such moment makes it a fragment of History. The video respects the music and the interpreta-

tion of Ana Bacalhau, the singer, with a single shot to the stage, where the live moment leads the plan. At the end of the music, accompanying the movements of the vocalist, announcing the end of the song, the camera turns to an audience and, in a revealing panoramic, it can be seen everyone at the concert hall standing and applauding. A collective feeling that this music embodied a political moment as it happened was recognised all over media channels and in the following events, as the Protest of 12 March 2011. The two realities precipitated themselves in each other, as a reflected reality of a particular generation.

Around 85 videos were gathered in the Youtube.com channel [imagens precárias](#) of this event. Many have a central focus on its musical connection to the political and social situation, brought up by two hits of the musical context. “A Luta é Alegria” by Homens da Luta and their presence at the Protest in Lisbon and “Que Parva que Sou” by Deolinda and the spontaneous identification of the lyrics with the transversal questions of social movements of that moment. These videos reflect the central role of music.

This confirmation is part of what Guerra describes as - “contemporary modalities of protest song (...) particularly in the post-2008 period characterised by a severe economic, financial and social crises (...), demonstrating how artistic manifestations- in this case, popular music - are both a means and an object of social intervention. For this reason, they define their own space in denunciation, in contestation, protest and revolt before the social reality”. (Guerra, 2019, p.2) One of Guerra’s analysis goals is a performative presence in the demonstrations through music, and for this purpose, a set of amateur videos of Youtube.com selected here have this parameter as a common denominator. This common ground, according to Guerra includes - “consider popular music and language as essential issues for establishing a national, collective and local identity” (Guerra, 2019, p.3).

Deolinda song “*What a Fool Am I*” is a case study, where a discourse appropriation happens by a group negotiation, as comment discussion on the video suggests. Guerra’s article proposes “that the lyrics are a form of narrating stories to ourselves and to others that take place in imaginary worlds; such narration is used to express emotions and beliefs. These stories are thus crucial because they constitute stories about ourselves” (Guerra, 2019, p.2) What is also relevant is a connection Guerra establishes between De Nora concept of the *technology of the self*, that is “how individuals use music to build an identity, by establishing a link between music and key moments in their lives” (Guerra, 2019, p.2.). As Guerra writes “At

the same time, music enables groups to establish collective identities by allowing a means for them to differentiate themselves, aggregating individuals with similar cultural tastes and practices” (Guerra, 2019, p.2) What, according to the author, is referred as “*the technology of the collective*”, conceptualised by Roy and Dowd (2010). The importance of such a sense of collective is the constitution of the music itself as part of a set of other technologies, the performative ones.

The musics referred here are songs that, as defined by Guerra “that not only seek to denounce but also *intervene/act*”, and these sphere leads to an “*incitement*” that “*refers to action*” - “which is fundamental to demarcating a space itself, as a thematic producer and not just a contemplative object of social reality”. One crucial argument is that these songs can “therefore assume the role of a producer of denunciation and protest, a creation of a thematic/problematic of their own; they become insurgents by provoking agitation and change through the reading that makes them important elements of a collective identity that simultaneously results from a significant process of self-reflection” (Guerra, 2019, p.4).

Can not this argument extend to the Youtube.com videos filmed, uploaded and shared on the Web? The concept of “producers of the protest”, by their means of expression, is extensible from the musical universe to those who filmed, sonorised their images and fueled common indignation within a platform like Youtube.com. With their live and multimodal perception and construction of a protest memory as the complexity and longevity of comments on such videos testify. There is a parallel to establish with “protest songs” and their place in the social movements and Youtube.com vernacular videos of the protest, that were created and shared in the platform.

It is also relevant to a conception of a refusal of temporality on Youtube.com. In one hand, it takes the form of a “24/7” “attention consuming economy” (Crary, 2017), a contact with outer reality interferes with a circular temporality on the virtual sphere. Therefore a flow of comments on a video as Deolinda concert footage, have a longevity that corresponds with a *virtual suspended temporality*, with political potential. For example, urgings of inflated words do not fade away, and they can be scrolled down and represent almost a decade of this dialogical interface.

This reminds Furio Jesi notions of uprising temporality. Online uprisings temporality do not fade away or are silenced with the end of the physical existence of social movements.

Only a software revision on the terms of use by the platform commercial strategy can put an end to digital multimedia “*soulèvements*”. Uprising materials are testimonies of its own flow tracked on Youtube.com videos, from its likes, dislikes, comments, visualisations, that remain in the platform and can be recovered, as examples of these nine years of comments on the Protest 12M from these specific videos.

One remark concerns the *integration of digital visuality as part of this protocol of memory* and patrimony, but also as part of the referred concept of “technologies of the collective”. The performance of the circuit of these Youtube.com images has been consolidated as part of creative modes of enunciating a protest in contemporary modes, and its viability - part of concrete action itself - a configuration of modes of use for protests. These practices extend a parallel for moving image and Youtube.com shared footage of protests.

Another conclusion in Guerra’s article can create another parallel between music and amateur video footage, shared in online platforms. Attention on protest songs, and vernacular videos, expose “another major crisis: that of contemporary society. They denounce the established power and the creation of fear, as a weapon and as an exponent of a common consciousness that is exhausted in the use and mimicry of the news (...). That is why these songs **sing the crisis**. They are the face of the present, of a deep social crisis of late modernity.” (Guerra, 2019, p.14) As defined to contemporary protest songs - “They show us the importance of an oblique view of songs and society, where there are no straight lines between them”. Furthermore, Youtube videos, a parallel reinforces itself: “Our attention must turn to ambiguity, openness, and polysemy - with a focus on the oblique nature of the links between the arts (the songs) - it could also be the case of cinematic montage - and their social context”. (Guerra, 2019, p.14). That is what political art questions itself.

The last video analysed here is a small tribute to all the cameras present in the Protest of Movimento 12M, but also to non-professional footage created in by those individuals that reinforce polysemic points of view. The video is called “[Camaras na manif “Geração à Rasca](#)”, was uploaded by an individual channel called Katia Hernandez, and it was uploaded in the same day of the protest, reinforcing an idea of the synchronous notion of action and memory. The video has some edition and subtitles with focus on image producers. The description is: “Uma pequena homenagem aqueles que estiveram lá a tirar fotografias, gravar vídeos com câmara ou telefone. Porque toda imagem é importante. Gracias!” - **“A tribute to those**

who were there taking pictures, recording videos with cameras or cellphones. Because all image matters. Thank you.” (my translation). It has around 976 visualisations, seven likes and not much more traffic on the author’s channel, defined as news and politics. Although plans perspective and a self-reference about imagery make it different a different piece, still converges with a corpus of videos that express a political and musical encounter. But at the same time, reverses the camera as a subject also. A small phrase captured by the camera in an interview condenses the image flow of Movimiento 12M. Someone asked what was going to be done with the images: “*I am going to make a musical struggle*”.

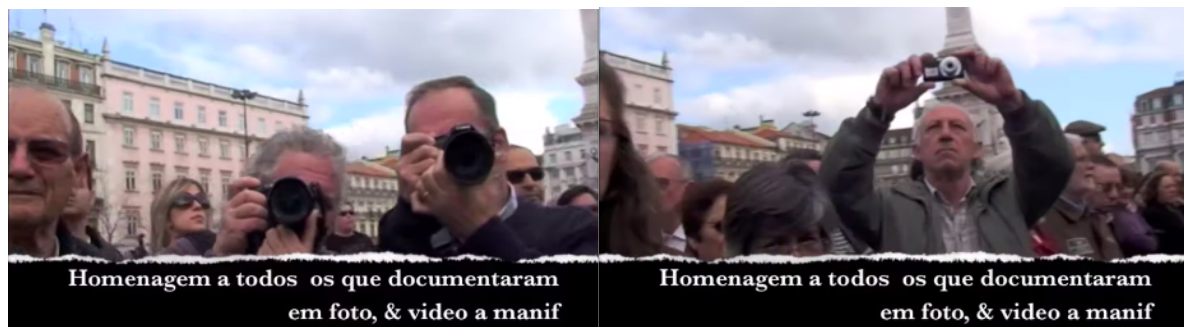


image 29 - still frames from “Câmaras na manif “Geração à Rasca”, by Katia Hernandez, 2011

4.3.3 #15M - *Indignadas* and *Acampadas*, words and assemblies

A central question of *Movimiento 15M* is about the spoken word in the events, well expressed in a peculiar poster that says “*Yes. To a war of words.*” The Spanish movement was a debated one, once occupation had a temporal persistence and a concept as *acampadas* was a meaningful performative collective action. A selection of videos of this movement has around 25 videos. The first video is by [etreus](#), a channel of street culture with live videos, that had special attention to 15M movement. The video [Democracia Real 15M - Indignados en Puerta del Sol - Madrid 15 Mayo 2011](#) had 687 visualisations, three likes, the category is without profit/ activism. Video description has the following text: “*Manifestación acampada del 15M, donde primero la juventud y luego una parte importante de la sociedad le presta el apoyo a los jóvenes, para que exijan los cambios que la sociedad necesita, para una mejor convivencia y bienestar para todos. El grito a lo que llaman Democracia Real o Democracia Participativa Directa*”.

The video has almost 12 minutes and has pieces of evidence of audiovisual literacy, camera and edition, it wanders around the square, shows and hears people on the street. The

hand camera stops, for example at the organised individuals that take food for the “acampadas”, in parallel editing with some still images of posters and their slogans. A strong presence in the video is live sound¹⁰³ Here, the political fuel of music was substituted by the live words of those with microphones speaking to the crowd in the squares. The video starts with a voice-over about the reasons to be there. Half the way, a man has a microphone claiming for union “from the left and the right” in the protest.

The plans of the square with the demonstrators follow them, with the sound of spokesman who takes a recent protagonism. A speech about support from “Arab springs” movement validates an international claim of the protest. Also a remark for a short street interview with a poster on the back about politicians. The poster stresses the disbelief of the political class. Another moment that interest the camera is an elder couple walking through the tents and the final images of those cooking and sharing food as a communal democratic gesture. A relevant presence to those who participated in 15M in Madrid and its parallel events in other cities of Spain, creating alternative forms of assembly.



image 30 - still frames of “Democracia Real 15M - Indignados en Puerta del Sol - Madrid 15 de Mayo 2011” by etreus, 2011

¹⁰³ if compared with the Portuguese streets, the music was the presence, not the word, and in these videos, direct sound is the choice to hear people discourses in the acampadas.

This short documentary testifies a potential tension of 15M movement in its early moment. After there is also a moment of music with someone playing the guitar, but the main structure of the video is direct cinema. Hence it explores a language much closer to film than to music clips or remix videos. A majority of videos, like this one, concentrates images of demonstrations in the Plaza del Sol Square, with a montage of atmosphere, but also with a strong component of still images with political messages.

Another interesting video, in a mix of music and reportage, is “[no con mi dinero! madrid 15 mayo 2011](#)”. The channel is a one video channel, created during this process to share this video or perhaps other materials from the movement. The video has some editing skills and a familiarity with the slow camera and image colour effects, along with an integration of some street interviews. It had 197 visualisations, zero likes and a description of the video is “*manifestation Democracia Real Ya! 15 mayo 2011!*”. The video was uploaded on 18 May, which includes its share as a political gesture, as a majority of videos here referred. It has a generic title and privileges some of the iconic moments of collective and performance as unfolding a banner from a building or a collective drum dance, an interview with someone with an “anonymous” mask. A part of an iconic circulation from a transference of insurrectional practices from “Arab Springs” events and Portuguese protest in a South Europe in crisis. A symbolic universe crossed Atlantic Ocean to a last social protest that year, “Occupy Wall Street.”¹⁰⁴

Another night video was “[Concentration Puerta del Sol. Madrid. 20 Mayo 2011](#)”, a 46 seconds video, one panoramic plan by night, with 400 visualisations and one like no comments. A channel was created perhaps during 15M movement days, and once the referred video was first to be uploaded. After this video, followed those to promote another demonstration, the 15 October, a global demonstration under the motto “United for a Global Change”. The plan itself is a night plan of the square with an invasion of balloons. It is a small fragment constituting a diversity of visualities. This can be the kind of images not taken into account in mainstream narratives of events. Nevertheless, wondering in Youtube.com wasteland makes us find some balloon party in a night of Protest in Madrid.

¹⁰⁴http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article0,28804,2101745_2102132,00.html. To underline this fact, the “Person of the Year” in Time Magazine of 2011 was “The Protester” last accessed March 2020.



image 31 - still frames from “Concentración Puerta del Sol. 20 Mayo 2011”, 2011

Another set of images is a collection of a variety of posters, billboards, placards with a range of individual statements that emerged in this visual landscape, that present themselves with sobriety and a political message. Such is the case of [SPANISH REVOLUTION, MOVIMIENTO 15 DE MAYO 2011, Puerta del sol \(Madrid\)](#). The video has around 301 visualisations, one like and the channel is an individual musical channel with some videos of live musical performances. Despite this fact, this the only political video or related the channel has. The musical choice is a protest song, performed by Joan Baez, edited with individual political messages. This video encapsulates some central ideas about this movement.

Its plural construction, from different groups and informal platforms as those described in Manuel Castells's “Networks of Outrage and Hope”: “were inspired by the struggles spreading throughout Europe against the social consequences of the rampant financial crisis”. Furthermore, they “were encouraged by the example of Iceland; by the possibility of successfully confronting the collusion between bankers and politicians through grassroots mobilisation” (Castells, 2013, p.111). One keystone of the movement is a conception of “*rhizomatic revolution*” as Castells call it, with node points in social media like Facebook accounts that designed graphs and routes of communication. Castells continues - “The group based on a decentralised network with autonomous nodes in different cities. In some cases (...) they met in person every Sunday morning. Hundreds joined the Facebook group, and some participated in the meetings.” (Castells, 2013, p.112). Also with a manifest, a “rhizomatic group” claimed for “Real Democracy Now! Take the streets. We are not merchandise in the hands of politicians and bankers”. As Portuguese Protest, Spanish mobilisation did not have any support by political parties, unions or other institutional groups.

Again it started digitally, on the Web, before it took the streets. But in Puerta del Sol, those who went to protest “decided they were not going to leave Puerta del Sol until they came to a consensus about the meaning of Real Democracy” (Castells, 2013, p.113) “The acampadas were born. Many more people came during the daytime. they participated in debates, activities, and demonstrations”(Castells, 2013, p.113). As described by Castells, an organisational side of occupation was well designed, and no problems occurred. Almost 800 cities around the world tried this *democratic form*, showing its global potential and impact. “The movement went on under different forms for several months, although most of the occupations of public space ended in early July”. (Castells, 2013, p.114). For this author, one important account of this movement was its condition of “*self-mediated movement*”. For this, Castells quotes Javier Toret: “What the 15-M has shown is that people can overcome a media block. The capacity of mass self-communication and self-organisation online has allowed people to overcome a media block”. (Castells, 2013, p.115).

One relevant question concerns the temporality of protests, not only online, and from nodes of social media and informal groups that sustained it, but from a perspective of a trace, a shared memory? A collection of Youtube.com videos recovered under this project can claim to make visible an individual production and remembrance of such an event. Some visual elements and fragile materials they were made of, as billboards and posters, but also spontaneous speeches on squares, made Youtube.com’s vacant lots look like a place to retrieve fragments of collective History. Some of these evanescent materials¹⁰⁵ will, through the individual agency, until the “platform interface ideology” of Youtube.com allows it, a recollection and creative use, as a *survival gesture* of these historical events.

A difference to Portuguese protest from 15M remained, persistence. In Madrid, people persisted in the streets, shaped a form to their persistence, a temporal and physical one - “acampadas” - where spoken words, and debates around democracy and contemporaneity, maintained assemblies and “democracia real ya”. We can recall Furio Jesi and question again uprisings timeliness. Spanish acampadas *endlessly* endured while they lasted.

Nevertheless, a volatile occupation of the streets with no conflicts was possible through fragile words on posters, microphone discourses, improvised tents and alternative daily

¹⁰⁵ The materiality of the protests resembles in its fragility the works of Thomas Hirschhorn, with his precarious sculptures and his thesis on precarious materials.

media routines that all vanished with the abandon of the squares within the course of History and politics. From Toret interview, Castells defines the Spanish movement as “*post-media*”:

“It is post-media because there is a technopolitical reappropriation of tools, technologies and mediums of participation and communication”, but also because spontaneous slogans and materials created a possibility of persistence. “People have created videos, and all sorts of signs with these slogans. The initial slogans had wide circulation because they were anonymous and they were common sense”. (Castells, 2013, p.120). Spontaneous videos of non-organised individuals created crystalised images of political potential, like an alternative experience. Its survival on Youtube.com platform is also a possibility of a collective portrait of people, close to a contemporary reenactment of “political cinema” Gilles Deleuze’s definition.

Castells wrote: “Yet even a new medium, as powerful and participatory as the Internet’s social networks, is not the message. The message constructs the medium.” (Castells, 2013, p.122). Now digital, “impure”, under “corporation ideology” software, but free, emancipatory, rhizomatic, made of singular experiences, videos, music and words. They are lasting for almost a decade on the Web. These are some of the remaining images of Spanish “*acampadas*”.



image 32 - still frames from “15M Democracia Real Ya Puerta del Sol Madrid”, 2011



image 33 - still frames from “15M Democracia Real Ya Puerta del Sol Madrid”, 2011

4.3.4 “#Occupy as Form.”

Occupy Wall Street was the last movement that punctuated the year of 2011. “*Demand the impossible*”, remember Judith Butler quoting from Situationists slogans “*Soyez Réalistes, Demandez l'impossible*”, in her appearance in Occupy Wall Street in “Judith Butler in Occupy Wall Street.”¹⁰⁶. The last of social movements in that year was somehow a condensation of overall movements. In this analysis, from Youtube.com videos, there is a possible political argument, present in its remnants. “Occupy” started in the last part of that year, at a financial world centre and symbolic capital of neoliberalism regime, where a correspondent configuration shaped a protest - “Occupy Wall Street”, or “*we are the 99%*”, expressing inequalities.

The most improbable of space was occupied by most improbable of demands. Remnant videos of this last movement expressed its sophistication: they reflect a complex problem in its demands and organisation. Videos of Occupy movement are enlightened, and they are a kind of complete reflex of a late phase of protests wave itself. Main slogans and phrases that organised the “occupy” concept were well demonstrated and sustained. “We are the 99%”, has such a scope that opens up globally contestant groups and protester identities. And

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVpoOdZ1AKQ> last accessed in March 2020

demands. It manifests in a multiplicity of videos, people filming on the street, all kind of images.

These images reflect problems of USA population at the time, and seen today, almost ten years after, at the light of contemporary politics, wondering what happened to these 99% comes to mind. “Occupy” footage is fluent, and it is mainly a *visual literate* one. The moments in the street correspond to direct cinema, *micro trottoir* moment and referential to North American countercultural tradition related to literature, music and documentary cinema. A particularly collective gesture remained *human microphone*, a specific practice of those days - someone's speaking and those around repeating it as an “*amplifier*” gesture.

The first of the videos selected is called “[Occupy Wall Street - interviews and images from October 2011](#)”. The video is a short documentary with a selection, editing, a sequence of images and interviews, with a generic and soundtrack. The video only had 444 visualisations, and its description is “Scenes from the occupation of Zuccotti Park, NYC”. The channel is an individual one, [by Janel Gazelle](#) where images were uploaded on the 14/11/2011. Janel Gazelle is a well-known communicator in the United States, due to be an activist gathering hiking and “girl empowerment.”¹⁰⁷ with beliefs in connecting with nature, along with well-managing practices of social media and personal blogging.

Her short documentary about “Occupy Movement” starts with a flyer, then moves to an interview to someone behind a counter distributing flyers. A first “occupier”, explains that he was there for 20 days, eating whatever “the lunch department” could provide. He intended to “*bring back the “we the people” of the North American constitution, instead of the “we the corporations”*”. Fade to black. The next scene is a woman with a big poster saying “Jews for racial and ethnic justice”. The woman’s reading “*we the jews, have experienced nothing but love, here in Occupy Wall Street*”. The author also comments on the amount of video cameras recording.

Each scene and character is separated by a fade in and out. Some other characters appear with other relevant political inputs. A teacher, a university student with a loan, “*I have to decide either to buy the books or to eat*”, an older person who participated in former protests and a woman representing an organisation against “*the holy trinity of the banks, the industrial and the military*”, “*the one per cent needs us, but we do not need them*”, or a mother from

¹⁰⁷ <https://janelgazelle.com/> - last accessed March 2020.

South California who never had been in NYC. There is a pleiad of characters in this video. Furthermore, to the question: “*Do you think anything is going to change?*”, the answer was “*I do not know, but is a start*”. The last part of the video is a sequence of still images with Marvin Gaye’s music “*What is going on*”. The video had one like and one dislike.



image 34 - still frames from “Occupy Wall Street - Interviews and Images from 2011”, by Janel Gazelle, 2011



image 35 - still frames from “Occupy Wall Street - Interviews and Images from 2011”, by Janel Gazelle, 2011

Nevertheless, the figure of the facilitators embodied a central role, where some prominent intellectuals - in a relevant gesture of intellectual debate in public life - were also present in the streets, appeared and were involved with the movement, since its beginning - Slavoj Žižek, David Graeber, Nicholas Mirzoeff or Judith Butler, among others. Also, artists as Patti Smith gave substantial input to the movement and a consequent long tail in the Web, with an impact on the performance of videos, duplicating its visualisations.

The last social movement of 2011 defined by Manuel Castells was aligned with the events of precedent months: “images and sounds of people’s determination to bring down dictatorships against all odds, at whatever cost, rekindled faith in people’s power, at least in some activists’ quarters. The echo of the Arab revolts was amplified by the news coming from Europe, and particularly from Spain, proposing novel forms of mobilisation and organisation, based on the practice of direct democracy as a way to further the demand for real democracy. In a world connected live by the Internet, concerned citizens became immediately

aware of struggles and projects they could identify with". (Castells, 2012, 158). Another clear reference as activist intervention is AdBusters, a "Vancouver-based journal of cultural critique, posted the following call on its blog:

"#occupywallstreet

Are you ready for a Tahrir moment? On September 17th, flood into lower Manhattan set up tents, kitchens, peaceful barricades and occupy Wall Street" (Castells, 2012, p.159).

As Castells continues, quoting from AdBusters elaboration: "A worldwide shift in revolutionary tactics is underway right now (...). [There is a] spirit of this fresh tactic - a fusion of Tahrir with the acampadas of Spain. The beauty of this new formula is its pragmatic simplicity: we talk to each other in various physical gatherings and virtual's people's assemblies. We zero in on what our one demand will be, a demand that awakens the imagination. " (Castells, 2012, p.159). This *late stage of social mobilisation* is present also in images, on these digital fireflies that persisted in virtual space and Youtube.com videos in particular. Parallel montages between "Wall Streeters" financiers, or "suits", that comment people they see occupying that symbolic space of pavements with imaginative and libertarian slogans. They were present in the videos, testimonies and montage, even if with a "flaneur" attitude, a threshold through the movement, the tents and its organisation. The videos reflect the organisation aspects, like an improvised library or children's visits, participating in an event like that could belong to their photo album and future memories.

These collective images also reflect an unforgettable moment of human bonding and collective and individual empowering, as in ["OCCUPY WALL STREET: Mic Check. Zuccotti Park. NYC 10/15/2011"](#). And this leads us to already referred to "*human microphone*". The *micro-moments*, where *human microphone* - someone is talking and those around repeat to what is said to be heard more widely - is actively and equally used, for someone like Judith Butler addressing a crowd, but also on the answers, and has a method for everyone to be heard on "*occupied space*".



image 36 - still frames of “OCCUPY WALL STREET: Mic Check. Zuccotti Park. NYC 10/15/2011”, 2011

These videos, through their panoramics, hand-travellings, buzz sound and second plan parallel talks, with moments of active listening to some of the human mics, reveal, in a hard constituent place like Manhattan area, with its symbolic charge and even physical conditions of narrow streets, cutting through the skyscrapers, a strength of those who responded to this movement. This hyper-visualised space from Lower Manhattan, Zuccotti Park, to Washington Square, redimensioned, and a human perspective brought to the front line. The plans shot from a bodily position retained an enclosed dimension of a non-human architectural scale, with no open spaces. Even Zuccotti Park, a smaller square, compared with Washington Square, can be seen first as an open space, a human scale, where people can gather. Youtube.com digital fireflies of these days testify such asymmetric magnitude. Lower plans, inside tents, among crowd perspectives.

Other essential aspects are the details of curiosity that a camera can pull out of those on the street. People talk to the camera. And cameras talk back to them, testifying and reacting to their confessions and shares. These can be a "two-way effect" images- on the one hand, our collective “*New York imagery*” in these spaces that reconnect us within a familiarity with images. What is different, for example of Egypt's images, from where our collective images did not have a mental map match with Tahrir Square on Cairo, or even Madrid and Plaza del Sol. Also, the “characters” found, whom we find familiar in their speeches, due to the presence of North American popular culture in our media literacy.

4.4 Habitual New Media and Vernacular Video Communities - The Multimedia Assembly

Each movement had a historical chronology and a context moment that coincided with a specific type of images and consequently a political approach. If “Arab Springs” coincided with images of “insurgency” and “urgency”, pointing the way to all kind of following imagery produced, each of the following movements had a specific tone. Portuguese protest had its musicality and collective memory, Spanish “*indignadas*” had their speeches and a reenactment of a democratic template, the “acampadas”, and “OccupyWS” was as a kind of synthesis of all that. One aspect of this late movement, present in these videos, is a completeness of these works. Either because those present in the protests were already aware of what kind of social movement they were involved in, or because a visual literacy and a visuality of these demonstrations had been developed during precedent movements.

On the other hand, it is possible to affirm that this crowd was familiarised with the cameras as part of the dialogical process of protest and political image production, but also as part of a digital social movement process, it can be defended. On a first level, images of those present both on streets and squares were shared online with a conscience that those images, videos or social media discussions created a *multitude of media resonance*, that *amplified* the streets and their action and protest.

Everyone had become a media outlet, as Shirky predicted, inhabiting Chun’s “*habitual new media*” with random cameras of protesters in physical space, and this became a political attitude, or as the author explains “our media matter the most when they seem not to matter at all, that is, when they have moved from the new to the habitual. Smartphones no longer amaze, but they increasingly structure and monitor the lives of their so-called owners” (“Update to Remain the Same- Habitual New Media”, Wendy Chun, 2016, from the introduction). Mobile phones with their incorporated cameras, but also the use of Youtube.com as part of the habitual new media flow, attested Chun’s argument, “Through habits users become their machines: they stream, update, capture, upload, share” (Chun, 2016, p.2)

The importance of habitual when becomes disruptive is for the author a possibility of embodying creative communities “Imaged and imagined connections are most often habits: things potentially or frequently repeated. Habit is information: it forms and connects. Habits

are creative anticipations based on past repetitions that make network maps the historical future. Through habits, networks are scaled, for individual tics become indications of collective inclinations”(Chun, 2016, p.3). With this argument it is possible to relate all individual gestures here analysed of taking photos, filming in the protests and editing and sharing this footage on Youtube.com as habitual use of new media, that enabled a *collective inclination*, out of habit users, appeared concatenations of machines of political images. And possible collective portraits appeared.

The horizon of a historical future appeared, from the fragments produced from this collective machine, the social concatenated machine of Gerald Raunig. Until the year of 2011, habitual new media had not been globally empowered as “a historical future” of “collective inclination”. Instead, as Peter Snowden describes “vernacular”, from a common-sense use from apparent innocuous intimacy, became an enabler of other political configurations. Snowden uses the concept “vernacular” in Ivan Illich’s terms, where it is instead a collective aggregator. Hence vernacular values do not erode community but instead strengthen it.

To such a political change applied to Youtube.com “mass image” perspective, Peter Snowden’s argument is a close reading and reenactment of this concept in Ivan Illich, that proposes “a theoretical framework for considering these videos collectively as an emerging “vernacular” practice, based on the sense given to that term by Ivan Illich in his work of the early 1980s”. Peter Snowden decisive and central argument to this thesis also is “applying Illich’s political conception of the vernacular to a realm - **online video** - where the term has generally functioned up till now as a purely descriptive category.” (Snowdon, 2014, p.403) As Peter Snowden remarks, vernacular is widely used as a “user-generated content” kind of descriptor within new media and visual production, with a meaning of “private rather turned public”, with a degree of commonly innocuous and popular interpretation, and taken to academic analysis while bearing adjectives like “amateur” or “non-professional”. To generate a new approach to these domestic videos and the plural practices beyond them, this author recovers Ivan Illich’s “*theory of “vernacular values”*”.

Long before Tiziana Terranova or Maurizio Lazzarato and Attention Economy theories, Ivan Illich defined a radical distinction between *shadow work* and *vernacular genre*. The former, after which Ivan Illich named the first book of the trilogy, in 1981, “consists of all those unpaid activities that are needed to make commodities bought on the market genuinely

useful to and usable by the household” (Snowdon, 2014, p.407) which, from television to mobile phone and its pleiad of applications, for example, or from geolocalisation to bi-rhythmic metrics, have invaded modern individual lives. On another pole, and inheriting E.P.Thompson “moral economy” horizon, “Illich identified vernacular practices as those activities that help make any given community autonomous from both the market and the State – activities which enhance subsistence, and reduce dependency.”(Snowdon, 2014, p.407) According to Peter Snowdon’s argument, who will focus on the “Arab spring” visual productions and online sharing as part of a strategy of political aesthetics of those movements, using Jacques Rancière’s concept of “partage du sensible” (Rancière, 2000) in this case this is personified by the gesture of digital video creation as political uprising.

Although Snowdon affirms that “many of the personal and individualistic Euro-American uses of online video which common academic usage would describe as “vernacular” *should be classified as shadow work*” at a first surface level, “they make little or no contribution to strengthening those forms of collective reciprocity on which autonomy and subsistence depend” (Snowdon, 2014, p.408). The Youtube.com motto “Broadcast Yourself” does reflect a focus on the self, as Peter Snowdon arguments, but at the same time, it is an extended mirror maze and a “social praxis” of visibility at a global scale, embodying such a diversity of visual cultural practices. According to Illich’s theory, these corresponds to a gesture of another order, “the vernacular is intrinsically performative; it is essentially rooted in the primacy of bodily gesture and action;” and “it, therefore, cannot be understood through abstract conceptual analysis, but can only be approached through poetry and metaphor.”(Snowdon, 2014, p.408).

What could be a better expression of such a physical gesture than an image creation of such a pleiad of videos of voyages, speeches, classes, concerts, machine uses, dance and performing experiences? As Peter Snowdon argues, vernacular experiences are “constantly and continuously being reenacted”, and as defined by Ivan Illich, they belong to a “space of the vernacular” that “is always particular, heterogeneous, asymmetrical, embodied, ambiguous and alive” (Illich 1982:105-118, in Snowdon, 2014, p.408) but also of *collective action in virtual, hybrid public space*. These communities became new spaces that become assemblies.

Judith Butler defined¹⁰⁸ in her article “*Bodies in Alliance and the politics of the street*” (Butler, 2011) anchors the image of those in alliance, amid the maelstrom of social movements of 2011, and evidences the premisses of such encounter. Public squares, pavement and bodies, with their words, written and spoken and their political energy, but also with their mobile cameras and an internet connection, “the collective actions collect the space itself, gather the pavement, and animate and organise the architecture”. Referring to 2011 street demonstrations, although its differences, an arch of common practices and experiences can be traced, once “something similar happens: bodies congregate, they move and speak together, and they lay claim to a certain space as public space”. Even if the space as public is not a given fact, and as the author writes, is visible on the videos, “the collective actions collect the space itself, gather the pavement, and animate and organise the architecture”(Butler, 2011).

In Butler’s question “how it is that assembly and speech reconfigure the materiality of public space, and produce, or reproduce, the public character of that material environment” (Butler, 2011) there is also a *spectral level*, the Web or online space, once the public space, now understood as a hybrid by Castells, for example, and its heterogeneous actions are part of this “reconfiguration” of the materiality of public space. The importance Judith Butler gives to the material environments, like the square and the street, and its “re-function” as part of the action with a crucial role to “any theory of public and corporeal action” can in part, also apply to the digital sphere of multimedia materials. The contemporary social movements forms, synthesised in 2011, where public assemblies were spaces of struggle, but not only “over what will be the public space, but a struggle as well over those basic ways in which we are, as bodies, supported in the world - a struggle against disenfranchisement, effacement, and abandonment.” (Butler, 2011)

Through its digital visual dimension as analysed with the lens of the proposed concept of digital visual fireflies, we can say that this struggle against effacement is also a struggle for visibility. A visibility that embodies nomination and politics, the “right to be seen” on the “open” space of the Internet, through individual or collective, non organised, informal participation is also part of the constitution of the public action, within its material environments, but also its media expressions on the Web. Part of the alliance of the bodies and their images.

¹⁰⁸ Butler, Judith “Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street”, in - <http://eipcp.net/transversal/1011/butler/en/print> last accessed March 2020.

The author relates to Hannah Arendt, “when she claimed that all political action requires the “space of appearance” as a Roman concept of the public square, being a condition of assembly, free speech and participatory democracy. The shift in Arendt’s thought is the de-centered idea of the Polis, “is not the city-state in its physical location”, in her words, but “it is the organisation of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together” where “its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be”. For Butler, in Arendt’s formulation, a “true” space “between the people” establishes “a space which belongs properly to alliance itself”. A space that is self-constituted not from its physical location, but rather alliance “brings about its own location, highly transposable”. A digital hybrid space brought to another level by this *transposable ubiquity*, in another front of protest, within Web own protocols, amplifying the struggles and the “space between the people”. As Butler quotes from Arendt - “action and speech create a space between the participants which can find its proper location almost anywhere and anytime.” (Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p.198).

These so called Youtube.com fireflies are, at once, human presence, words, materials, and at the same its projected possibilities, images. Part of a transposable alliance, and a step further in it. They also occupy a particular space, a vacant lot in digital video “poor images” landscapes. If, as Arendt affirms and Butler confirms, “that politics requires the space of appearance”, she also claims that space is precisely what politics brings about: “it is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to other as others appear to me, where men (sic) exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly”. As Judith Butler develops, space and location, or an occupation of a space is “created by plural action”. And that “action, in its freedom and power, has the exclusive power to create location”(Butler, 2011), and reinforces Butler, always bodily “supported”, even in its virtual forms. Thus is the trace of these corpus of images, impressions of presence.

Youtube.com digital fireflies here analysed make a stand about these dialectics of space and action occupation theory. Youtube.com virtual space, in its political and ideological corporation settlement, has at the same time permeated the action, free and powerful, of a collective of bodies, of alliances, expressing and creating materialities through their double occupations, the streets and the Web, under the figure of the Patron. And the persistent ima-

ges, under its patronage and within their alliance, become part of a constituent link between the people and the “people of images”, that wander in Youtube.com wasteland.

In Butler’s terms, “*the body must appear*”, somehow as a self to others, but also the self as a “way of being “for” the other - in a way, dispossessed. And could this not be a definition of image? An other, bodily dispossessed .

Body dispossession of a self perspective, is a necessity, for the author. Specially for bodies acting together, in a “space that constitutes the gap between my own body and another’s”. And this alliance creates a space of appearance, a space out of its communal and bodily creation, in Arendt’s terms, from visibility and speech. The constitution of such space in Youtube.com can be part of this “space of appearance”?

One form taken to create these spaces between the people can be an embodiment of a *multimedia assembly of images* or rather a *vernacular community of protest images* that will emancipate this collective corpus of protest images, precarious images that can perhaps entangle a emancipatory retrieval strategy to the multitudes that produced them. These images, liberated in their vernacular existences from the private forum of domesticity and embodying the political sphere of intimacy or individuality, become, as the bodies in alliance in the streets and the saques, their reflexive political entities in virtual hybrid public spaces, and can constitute a position and an untimeliness presence in multimedia assemblies, participating in such expanded political communities.

5. PLATFORM FILM as MONTAGE COMMUNITIES

5.1 Summary

How to produce an interactive documentary, collaboratively, with the digital archive of contemporary social movements demonstrations?

How to create aesthetic and political modes of interaction with these images, producing a digital artefact that participates in the shaping of a collective memory of XXI century multitudes, through cinema montage?

This prototype, a practice-based digital artefact focuses on the production of a cinematographic intervention platform to address, partly, a problem of dissolution of experience as a process of relation with collective visual memory, and, consequently, of appearance, or portrait, of such multitudes, that are over-exposed and immersed today. However, at the same time embody a heterogenous consistency, that rapidly disappears as a collective corpus of remembrance.

The artefact creates a collaborative re-montage on different plans, contributing to documentary co-creation processes in digital culture environment in its interactive possibilities. Also, it contributes to collective memory and historical narratives through its relation to cinema and new media. The platform core architecture basis is a **video editor** that focuses on the possibilities of edition and distribution of different multimedia digital materials, like videos, sounds and photographs uploaded by individual participants into the platform. This artefact was designed to respond to fluxes of images as those produced during social movements demonstrations, like those that happened in 2011, on the tail of the Arab Springs, like the Portuguese protest, “Protesto da Geração à Rasca”, Madrid 15M, and Occupy Wall Street. That moment of political potencies of the technological affordances of digital culture and social media specifically produced, as analysed by Youtube.com footage, a diversity of digital materials, perhaps dispersed through personal computers and hard drives. These materials can convoke an activist intervention.

The outcome of this practice-based research, this prototype of a platform film, an interactive documentary, is a mural of different films, visible on a mosaic, or picked from a loop. Its goal is to create a machine that enables an activist use by individual participants of these

materials, enabling the creation of two types of participation, personal timelines or films, that at the same time, are incorporated in a collective film, shown in two modes, a continuous loop or a mural, whose appearance is that of a tapestry of fragmented images.

The editor can be accessed on a “participatory mode”, where individual access leads to an editing table, with customised tools with different stylistic modes of use, experimented from montage strategies of a corpus of films chosen, that will be analysed next, to enact an activist participation of each user. Each individual can start with personal footage upload, like videos, images and sounds, and continue with a montage of public and individual materials. Using solid colour filters or rewriting over the canvas of the screen with airbrushes, or paintbrushes like graffiti cans, besides an exercise of recording a soundtrack directly over images from user-generated content code sources to explore self-discourse. After this montage, each timeline can be saved in a collective mural and shared into other media formats, to migrate and be disseminated.

There exists a collective deposit, a sum of public footage different materials collected from a clipping media process, like televisions and newspapers, on the events of the demonstrations, to be used by individuals during the creation of their films. This deposit is to be mixed with each participant footage, diluting the borders of authorships and reenacting practices of appropriation and remix, creating in each participants timeline, through the editing process and mix of collective materials and their own materials, a multimedia patchwork on the platform.

The second mode of participation offers a possibility to record a self-portrait, as an interview game, as a testimony, a gallery of faces and participants, through user-generated content. This participatory screen self-performance intends to create another pole of tension, a singular in the face of multiple. To each participant, in a close-up, a voice and a personal statement on life conditions are recorded, collecting testimonies as a source of oral history, from each one's direct speech. The platform “user experience” has two paths, besides the participant mode, can be navigated in a viewer mode.

5.2 Critical Laboratory or Modes of Production

“This laboratory is utopian and realistic at the same time.”

(Critical Laboratory, Thomas Hirschhorn, 2014)

5.2.1 To the digital a cardboard template - Thomas Hirschhorn's Contemporary Artwork

“To be in agreement (with the world) does not mean to approve.

To be in agreement means to look. To be in agreement means not to turn away.

To be in agreement means to resist the facts.”

(Thomas Hirschhorn, “Critical Laboratory”, 2013)

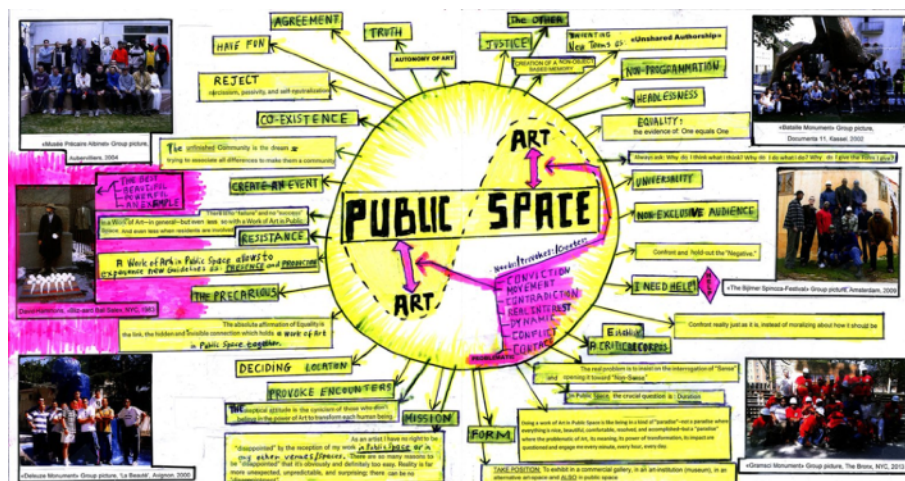


image 37 - Schema: “Art and Public Space”, 2016, © Thomas Hirschhorn ¹⁰⁹

The modes of interaction of Thomas Hirschhorn for public multimodal art installation such as the four philosophers Monuments, especially “Gramsci Monument” in New York in 2013, are taken here as a model for the constitution of online artistic and activist intervention in the form of an artist platform. Thomas Hirschhorn's work is constituted upon a horizon of “*bad new days*” as the title of Hal Foster's book captures (Foster, 2013), facing a contem-

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.thomashirschhorn.com/maps-schemas/>. As important as his sculptures and installations, his projected artworks, like this drawing and other drawings, reveal the “design thinking” and its importance in his work.

poraneity urgency. Hirschhorn defines his attitude in the face of the world, as agreeing, not approval.

The agreement is not to approve, but instead, to face the world, synchronised with its movements. The artist works, aligned with references of a “left art and theory tradition”, of those like Bertolt Brecht’s, Walter Benjamin (in “*Reflections*” as referred by Hal Foster), or like Hannah Arendt’s “*Men in Dark Times*”(1968). This positioning, balanced in the string of artistic and theoretical practice of compromising with social commitment and the concept of “general intellect”. To address this positioning Thomas Hirschhorn assumes a posture that can be defined by this “*being at the world*”, a place where the artist “*finds most of his strategies and situations in “the capitalist garbage bucket” that is our shared world*”.

We can say that one of the “visual districts” (Mirzoeff, 2002) from this “bucket” is the online vacant lots of Youtube.com videos. With this in mind, design of the use of space in Thomas Hirschhorn’s public installations is taken here as a model of settlement in a virtual space to this digital artefact. To exercise this transversal hypothesis this research depicts from Thomas Hirschhorn's work the following aspects: the problematisation and settlement of public art installations, notably the series of the “Philosophers Monuments” and a “user experience” of such installations, from a perspective of the visitor or spectator.

Thus, the relevance of this exercise focuses on the role of devalued materials as in Thomas Hirschhorn's works and his theoretical framework for those choices. This fact links directly with Hito Steyerl concept of “poor image”, and a parallel can be essayed with these type of footage, the protagonist of the prototype. Another relevant aspect of the modes of production of this artist is the conceptual and material prototyping of his works, with particular attention to maps and schemes that expose a *modus operandi* embodied with design thinking practices. Thomas Hirschhorn graduated in Graphic Design, and this intersection exposes possibilities of design thinking frameworks and workflow in a very particular journey with artistic goals. A fruitful encounter to this research and artefact.

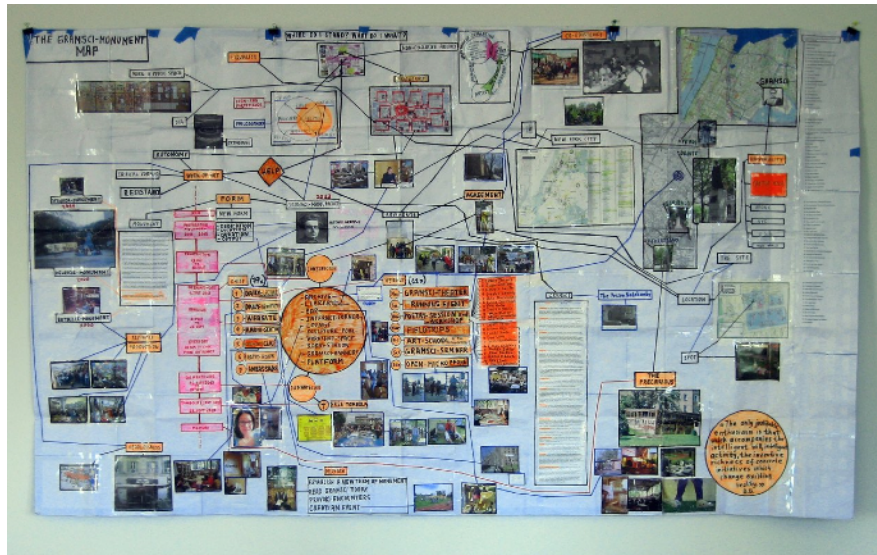


image 38 - The “Gramsci Monument” Map, © Thomas Hirschhorn, 2013

The “Philosophers Monuments” are four significant works dedicated to Hirschhorn’s admired philosophers. Thomas Hirschhorn located his art projects in some “loaded places”, strategically placed – “Spinoza” Monument in Red-Light District, “Deleuze” in a Maghreb community neighbourhood of Avignon, “Bataille” in a Turkish one in Kassel and “Gramsci”, in the “black Latino” neighbourhood of the Bronx. In the case of the monument dedicated to Baruch Spinoza, set in Red Light district in central Amsterdam in 1999, comes with the following explanation by the artist “I am back from Amsterdam, where I did the Spinoza Monument. 1. The exhibition organisers are individuals working and living in this neighbourhood (the red light district) who therefore really wanted the artists to get involved in this environment and public space”. (Thomas Hirschhorn, “Critical Laboratory”, 2013, p. 195).

Also in Deleuze Monument, the conception and its placement in a housing project in Greater Avignon were subject of some written reflection from the artist, useful to this research to problematise theoretical implications on the “*matter of location*”, that impacts both the artwork and the location itself. “I understand that this project might not be appreciated by or suit some, though I truly think the Deleuze Monument is not likely to bring instability to the neighbourhood. Instead, I think it could shed light, light on ideas, a reflection, a vision of the world”. (Hirschhorn, 2013, p.211).

Thomas Hirschhorn occupies a specific area with the installation settlement, within a limited duration, for instance as in the “Gramsci” Monument, that lasted two months and a half, in the space of Forrester Apartments, Bronx, New York in 2012. During this time, peo-

ple circulated and interacted with the available physical wood platforms, went to the cafés, listened to talks about the philosopher work, took part of the construction, created the installation, where “residents were paid to help him build a scruffy, ramshackle complex out of plywood, two-by-fours, blue tarps, brown tape and plexiglass. Resembling a home for post-apocalyptic survivors, it has a library stocked with books on political and social theory; a radio station; a space for producing a daily newspaper; a snack bar; and a stage for musical and theatrical performances. There is a room equipped with computers and another with a small exhibition of the personal effects of Antonio Gramsci” - this description was written by Ken Johnson in his New York Times review¹¹⁰ of Gramsci Monument in 2013. The purpose of the installation, close to Gramscian theory, was not to exhibit in the traditional sense but to design a “user experience” with different forms of exposing “Antonio Gramsci”, in the diverse spaces and activities, where participants from the neighbourhood and visitors could appropriate Gramsci theories in several forms. The artwork is also a designer work.

Thomas Hirschhorn writes about his understanding of such public art and activities in other artwork, “Musée Précaire Albinet”(2003), that he took as a manifesto of what an artist can do in public space. Several openings, writing workshops, debates, exhibitions of his favourite artists (such as Duchamp, Malevich, Beuys) to place in or to create a circulation within the artwork. Out of the “*spectrum of evaluation*” of art publics, Hirschhorn expresses his goals: “only art does not exclude the other, and only a work of art possesses the universal ability to initiate a dialogue one to one. As an artist, this is what I want: to create the conditions to initiate a dialogue one to one” (Hirschhorn, 2013, p.101).

The Web and its virtual space thought in this research and artefact as a representational location and Youtube.com “visual district” assumed as a comparative terrain, to which this artefact essays an alternative space, that of an **activist platform**. As Joseph Beuys conception of “Social Sculpture.”¹¹¹, transported to the virtuality of the Web in digital times.

These questionings and its resolutions in Thomas Hirschhorn’s work accompanied the development of the artefact as a transposed experiment. Once the artefact deals with the same

¹¹⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/26/arts/design/a-visit-to-thomas-hirschhorns-gramsci-monument.html>, last accessed in March 2020.

¹¹¹ There are several readings of Beuys concept. Briefly, we take here the “art term” definition in Tate, “*Social sculpture is a theory developed by the artist Joseph Beuys in the 1970s based on the concept that everything is art, that every aspect of life could be approached creatively and, as a result, everyone has the potential to be an artist*” <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/social-sculpture>. last accessed April 2020.

kind of questions but in a space with different characteristics - public installations and online video platforms. The same strategy convokes different individual agents as participants - the inhabitant collaborators of Hirschhorn that lived in places he chose and those protesters who actively were in the demonstrations and collected digital media materials used in the platform artefact. - Moreover, this comparison brought a referential traject, where a methodology converges to transpose and adapt these artistic practices and theoretical frameworks, once the settlement of the design is set and enables to develop and concentrate in other artistic practices, different from Hirschhorn's "monuments", focusing instead in cinematic resolutions, oriented by montage.

The strategy in this research and artefact relies upon the transposition of a double-action of transforming those who, in the case of Hirschhorn's, actively participated in the construction of the sites or the visitors, in activists, meaning those who act to a cause - the cause of getting closer to these philosophers theories - but using artistic means - in Hirschhorn's case the whole workflow of the installations - becoming Weibel's definition, "activists". In the case of the platform, those activists that recorded materials during the demonstrations, - "some of those videos whose emergency fueled social contestation.¹¹²(Castells, 2012) - can make use of them artistically, through cinematic montage, in a collective work, as a public installation.

Hal Foster reminds us that this strategy from Thomas Hirschhorn comes from a direct political Left tradition, that starts with the Marxist concept of "*general intellect*" (in Marx, "Fragments on Machines", Notebook VII, Grundrisse) from where the author tries to rehabilitate cultural and political resources, but aesthetic also. This "*general intellect*" is *pretentiously asleep*, and a need to awake collective awareness crosses artistic practices and intentions. In Foster's definition, these are common individuals that face different levels of insurrection necessity. Nevertheless, in contemporary digital conjuncture, common individuals are a vast majority of the social corpus that has already changed history, culture and politics with their "*digital expressions*". The technological mediation they used is also relevant to the social and media systems. Digital remnants of such insurrections left in Youtube.com are the subject of this research and artefact, constituting a thread of traces, and embodying a potential form for the patchwork of this digital "general intellect" awakening.

¹¹²The duration of an occupation is an interesting question, both political and social, as seen from classic examples of Paris Commune to Acampadas and Occupy.

This artefact creates a dialogue with youtube.com, from interrogating its means of production, circulation and intervening in its influential area, through analysis and proposing alternative structures. However, it is from a dialogical performance of interaction enabled in **artist intervention**, where multitudes can encounter this platform, that each individual timeline and digital image uses appear and shape a collective portrait. It is from this practice that an evolving community exposes itself and is created inside the platform and outside it. As in Arendt, “people appears” in the “between space”.

5.2.2 Precarious Materials

In her thesis “Thomas Hirschhorn: A New Political Understanding of Art?” (Dartmouth, 2018) Christina Braun describes the materiality of Thomas Hirschhorn artworks: “Cardboard, wood, packing tape, garbage bags, aluminium foil, press photos, and sometimes strange everyday objects placed beside texts by famous philosophers.”(Braun, 2018, p. 59).

The source of materials within the artistic process is “an essential element of production” continues the author, supported by Theodor Adorno conceptions on his “Aesthetic Theory.”¹¹³, where a distinction is made between material and matter. Material including also “immaterial substances that are intended to be processed, everything is potentially a basic material for art today (...)” From Hirschhorn collection, the “main materials employed (...) are a wide variety of industrially manufactured materials, as familiar as they are cheap, most of which can be categorised as packing material and office supplies”. (Braun, 2018, p.59). These materials were complemented with important “counter-materials” of printed and photocopied texts from literary and philosophical texts. Thus, in the context of the artworks in practice called by the artist “Presence and Production” several events take place, in the presence of the artist, that Braun describes as “performative material elements” like workshops, readings, a television broadcast, or simply a café with pre-scheduled happenings that are part of the exhibition.

“Hirschhorn’s base materials are cheaply available everywhere, ephemeral, and familiar to the contemporary viewer from daily life.” (Braun, 2018, p.62) In Braun’s analysis, that she entitles “the genesis of a Precarious Material Aesthetic”, a correspondence is made between

¹¹³ Theodor W. Adorno, “Aesthetic Theory”. trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Athlone Press, 1997; repr., London: Continuum, 2004), 194.

the physical qualities and economic value of this materials with its symbolic value, and under Hirschhorn's understanding of the meaning constitution, in artistic material processes and according to with his concept of political art. Another important aspect of this artist workflow practice is such process of working within schemes and maps (consider some of the images above) as a crucial architectural, quasi-sculptural proceeding of his production process.

The importance of “layout” and “displays” reveal an ease with design mindsets, “thus reflecting, on the one hand, his earlier training as a graphic designer”. (Braun, 2018, p.63) Although the former activity of the artist is not irrelevant, it is observable his theoretical and aesthetic traject through this creative environment, that even has a separated page - maps and schemas - in his official site, <http://www.thomashirschhorn.com/maps-schemas/>.



image 39 - “Timeline: Work in Public Space”, © Thomas Hirschhorn, 2012

The same approach can be made with video materials to use in the platform. This individual footage from mobile phones and other “vernacular” and “habitual new media” outlet producers, embodying a definition of “poor image”, not from only from the point of view of the “rag”, “copy”, but from its potential for *imperfect cinema*, as the author addresses Juan García Espinosa text: “*For an imperfect cinema*” (Espinosa, 1979). From Steyerl's words - “Espinosa also reflects on the promises of new media”. In the text, the author underlines the perspective of a filmmaker to envision “that the development of video technology” would unbalance the filmmaking class systems and “will jeopardise the elitist position of traditional filmmakers and enable some sort of mass film production: an art of the people. Like the economy of poor images, imperfect cinema diminishes the distinctions between author and audi-

ence and merges life and art. Most of all, its visuality is resolutely compromised: blurred, amateurish, and full of artefacts.”¹¹⁴ (Hito Steyerl, 2009). Such is the aim of the platform film proposed in this artefact.

5.3 “Computer as Theatre”, Brenda Laurel and Bertolt Brecht

5.3.1 Prototyping Interaction as a Theater Stage

In what concerns the artefact modes of productions in terms of COMPUTER HUMAN INTERACTION, or specifically, “human-computer experiences” design will be followed closely, in the first stage of the platform, the orientations of design theorist Brenda Laurel, precisely a theatrical metaphor developed in her classical text “Computer as Theater” (1993, 2013) for the *settlement of the platform*. In the sense of the creation of a clear aesthetic and political proposal to the interaction, this artefact will endeavour.

The metaphor is established on the home page, where the platform goal and its modes of engagement are explicit—assuming a discourse from a distanced point of view rather than appealing to a ubiquitous online experience and participation. In order to achieve this “distanced action” or “informed action” there is a presentation text in the third layout page. It is also a presentation with a little bit of manifest, a tone of gaming to give a modulation for those who want to continue to navigate the platform. After this comes a loop of images, a brief encounter and the button to “dive in”. To consider these participants of action or interaction, was a coordinated experiment from both Brenda Laurel and Bertolt Brecht references.

Theatric and dramaturgic experience in usability design as *metaphors* were taken here in consideration, through Brenda Laurel’s work in “Computer as Theater”. On theatrical landscapes, Bertolt Brecht’s epic and political theatre theories become a direct influence. A digital artefact developed as an expanded documentary embodying an audiovisual platform, that will materialise in a screen interface of an online site. Each participant, with their own footage, can upload, edit, remix others footage and share it in a dynamic web mural—an interactive, participatory, montage documentary from individual experiences.

¹¹⁴ <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/> - last accessed March 2020.

One relevant question to this research was how to work interactivity and how to work the question of connectedness. There are several paths to think Computer-Human Interaction in interactive documentary field conceptually. Examples are “autopoiesis regulation”, for example, as in Sandra Gaudenzi references to Varela and Maturana cell theories, focusing on natural sciences metaphors for digital communications systems, for interactivity design. Also, with the development of 360° technologies and VR, the emergent metaphor is *immersive media*. Immersiveness has been a prominent mode to extend the spectator regime.

Other metaphorical possibilities are presented here, other affordances to this *inter-activity* or *inter-action* or, we can also articulate as a *relation*. Focusing on interactivity concept, not as a reactive result, but as a verb, to produce, and in this sense, interaction can mean a voluntary gesture. Another choice of metaphors for this relationship, between human action as understanding, but also as aesthetics and political experience, even if experience comes from computer screens present in our everyday lives, can be a humanistic metaphor. An allegory to question this interaction through human-computer relation thresholds, from a world of men is Theatre. Theatre as human action is political, as underlined through Laurel’s reference of Bertolt Brecht’s work.

For this approach Brenda Laurel’s classical text “Computer as Theater”, represented an adjustable reading for computer-human interaction analysis, oriented for design thinking. The text rethinks the space of interaction as a **theatre stage**, where a user experience, or in another sense, the spectator, will interact with a world, as in a play, inducing from the theatrical sphere the enactment of new adventures in screen mediated interactive connections to the world. Laurel’s book had its first edition in 1993, and a second updated version in 2013. Like Don Norman expresses on the foreword “Theatre is about interaction, about themes and conflicts, goals and approaches to those goals, frustration, success, tension, and then the resolution of that tension. Theatre is dynamic, changing, always in motion” and on the other hand “Our modern technologies with their powerful computers, multiple sensors, communication links, and displays are also about interaction”. (Norman in Laurel, 2013, p.4)

What is at stake here is to define a space of the interface, or interaction as *a relational space*, from a dynamic humanistic activity as affection is, within human cultural production. Again from Don Norman foreword, “real interaction does not take place at the moment, on a fixed, static screen. Real interaction is ongoing over a protracted period”(Norman in Laurel,

2013p.5). Since social interaction is today also networked interaction, with personal computers or mobile devices, especially screen media, its different software and apps interfaces are like a stage, a “*platform on which we enact our own scenes and activities.*”

However, this encounter with the real is part of the essence of documentary as a genre, something that can define an approach to reality through someone’s journey, individual or collective, through someone’s constellation of moving images, sounds, and the constitution of a body of knowledge from this relation. Furthermore, in the case of interactive documentary, through an expanded connection, technologically mediated, that opens the space-time experience of cinema to a multimodal new sphere of communication ecosystems. From Brenda Laurel's text, the design is essential when conceptualising on movement through digital threshold of Interactive Documentary: “thinking about interfaces, is thinking too small. Designing human-computer experience (...) is about creating imaginary worlds that have a special relationship to reality – worlds in which we can extend, amplify, and enrich our own capacities to think, feel, and act.”(Laurel, 2013, p.22).

To develop her viewpoint, the author chooses theatrical metaphor, because the question brings back the human link again, *relation*. Theater, as *human socius locus* is about drama, conflict and narrative, resolution and catharsis. But specifically, the metaphor holds to, on Laurel’s words: “Theatre bears some similarities to interface design in that both deal with the representation of an action. Theatre, unlike novels or other forms of literature, incorporates the notion of performance; that is, **plays are meant to be enacted.**”(Laurel, 2013, p.30) This enactment will take place in a *performative* area, usually thought as a stage. In the stage, there are the actors, that portray characters, and perform actions in the physical context provided by the scene. It is the notion of performance that is central to this productive comparison. Also, a connection between emotions and conflicts are at the basis of this relation. This metaphor proposes the enactment of a role in the platform, the activist role, where the participant becomes an agent both of political action and aesthetic practices.

One relevant of this theoretical argument goes with an explanation of Brenda Laurel of “*what is a user?*” In her perspective - “In the context of human-computer interactions, “user” implies a power relationship and a kind of experience that tends to mischaracterise both technology and people. (...) For example, the “user” of a computer game is better characterised as a “player”; the “user” of an “e-book” is a “reader”. (...) I have used the word

“interactor” as a general term.” (Laurel, 2013, p.8). The “interactor” is not subaltern in the interaction.

Brenda Laurel takes Aristotelian text “Poetica” and navigates through Aristotelian archetypes, like the four causes of drama for instance: formal cause, being the form or shape of what it is trying to be - like mother and motherhood; the material cause, or what is made of, with a note that the properties of the material influence the structure. The efficient cause is how a thing is made, like the concrete process, of it. The end cause or its purpose is what it is intended to do in the world once it is completed. In Theatre, the formal cause is the plot, the whole action with a beginning, middle and end. The material cause is the stuff a play is made with – the enactment as the performance. The efficient cause the skills, tools and techniques of the playwright and the end cause, the pleasurable arousal and expression for a particular set of emotions in the audience. Catharsis.

This is Theatre's goal but also of other art forms. The release of emotions. Such in cinema and documentary, specifically, interactive ones, also. The converging metaphor here is the interface of Theatre transposed as an interface of online interaction, although it does not oppose to the original archetypal figure in this field that is the game metaphor. Instead, the option is to integrate several references in interaction design and attempt to develop a practical experience as the proposed artefact, whose methodologies also experiment from different backgrounds.

In design field, Brenda Laurel’s work built a bridge between the fields of human-computer interaction and a performative need for activist engagement within platform design and opened the door to continue a dialogue with some of the artistic figures of the constellation of this research. This takes us to another figure and another argument within this metaphor of Theatre, such as political theory by Bertolt Brecht, as described in Brenda Laurel’s text. What is implicit now is the argument that Bertolt Brecht - “extended the notion of catharsis beyond the temporal boundary of performance. For Brecht, interpreting his texts, catharsis is not complete until the audience members take what they have assimilated from the representation and put it to work on their lives. In Brecht’s hypothesis, the representation lives between imagination and reality, serving as a conductor, amplifier, clarifier and motivator.”(Laurel, 2013, p.37)

Brecht belongs to a political tradition of artists and intellectuals that thought and acted through a final cause to their work, a political relationship with their work, a play, a text, or a film, with a performative process of social change, with a claim of social transformation through the role of the audience, something aligned with general intellect awareness, as in Marx's expression. Indeed, in Bertolt Brecht's work "A Short Organum for Theatre"(1964) the author masters his vision on theatrical possibilities of this type of political action, presenting a theoretical perspective on aesthetics for Theatre, but also performance actions, now transposed to such demands as those of Computer-Human Interaction.

The most pertinent to accentuate here is the *Alienation effect*, and it is used in these artefacts as an experiment of an alternative relational process to the concept of immersiveness, overwhelming today, in an introductory text of the platform. In Brecht's words, "A representation that alienates is one which allows us to recognise its subject, but at the same time makes it seems unfamiliar. Such devices were certainly a barrier to empathy, and yet this technique owed more, not less, to hypnotic suggestion than do those by which empathy is achieved. The social aims of these old devices are entirely different from our own"(Bertolt Brecht's "A short organum for the Theatre. Affirmation 42", p. 192, in "Brecht on Theater, the development of an Aesthetic", edited by John Willett, 2014).

The notion of direct intervention, even if indirectly is presented: "The new alienations are only designed to free socially-conditioned phenomena from that stamp of familiarity which protects them against our grasp today" (affirmation 43, p.193). For Brecht, it also was about the possibility to contribute to a historical process. A possibility to create an understanding of the play to endure into the spectator spirit after the play ended. The artistic work on the social reality that the author refers focuses the actors' representations not on an identification with a character, or in as an interface metaphor, immersiveness, but instead being in a *distanced effect*, a disharmony with itself. In another text, of "Brecht on Theater - The development of an aesthetic" - a "Short Description of a New Technique of Acting which produces an Alienation Effect", Brecht focus on the work of the actors, and leaves indications about the derivatives of representation under the **alienation effect aesthetic**, coherent with his social perspective:

"The aim of this technique, known as the alienation effect, was to make the spectator adopt an attitude of inquiry and criticism in his approach to the incident. The means are artis-

tic.” (Brecht, 2014, p. 136). So the A-effect is directly linked with the relational process with a political goal, once part of staging strategies, and now in a proposition to play in digital environments with new possibilities. For Brecht, this means in detail, to give instructions directly to the actor: “In order to produce A-Effects, the actor has to discard whatever means he has learnt of getting the audience to identify itself with the characters which he plays. Aiming not to put his audience into a trance, he must not go into a trance himself.” (Brecht, 2014, p. 138).

Coincident with the process, the result is quite the opposite of immersive and “360°” interactivity and proximity engagement to an aesthetic affection of experience. The aim in this platform is to bring some other possibilities, to think from other perspectives and genealogies to the practice of interactive screen media art, specifically interactive visual platforms and new works on expanded cinema and documentary. Brecht wrote this text in the 1940s, but it could be about today, an essential explanation appears in affirmation 46: “Our own period, which is transforming nature in so many and different ways, takes pleasure in understanding things so that we can interfere. There is a great deal to man, we say; so a great deal can be made out of him. He does not have to stay the way he is now, nor does he have to be seen only as he is now, but also as he might become. We must not start with him; we must start on him. This means, however, that I must not simply set myself in his place, but must set myself facing him, to represent us all. That is why the Theatre must alienate what it shows”. (Brecht, 2014, p. 193).

The importance of a theatrical metaphor here also embodies an occupied space of the artefact, a space of interactions. The metaphor of the platform also shapes the “Theatrical Machine” theorised by Gerald Raunig, where a conceptualisation of a space of concatenation can also be the space of montage. Writing about the Post-Revolutionary Theatre in the Soviet Union, Gerald Raunig describes - “Instead of using the *machina* as a divine suspension of difference, the radical theatre-makers associated with Meyerhold and the First Moscow Workers Theater were more interested in multiplying differences, making them dance with the help of a multiple machinization of concepts and practices”. (Raunig, 2007, p.42).

5.4 Form as Platform

Platform, plate-forme, or flat form, stage as the “theatrical machines” (Raunig, 2007) also defined by its horizontality and equal access. Even as a computing engineer definition by Wikipedia is something very diffuse and very concrete at the same time, as the Wikipedia definition makes clear - “A computing platform or digital platform definition is “the environment in which a piece of software is executed. It may be the hardware or the operating system (OS), even a web browser and associated application programming interfaces, or other underlying software, as long as the program code is executed with it. Computing platforms have different abstraction levels, including computer architecture, an Operating system, or runtime libraries. A computing platform is the stage on which computer programs can run.”¹¹⁵.

This plasticity has become part of an “open” and “participatory” rhetoric nowadays, as Paolo Gerbaudo remarks on his referred article about Platform Parties and the digitalization of political organization. Its unclear cut and inclusive meanings seem to fit a contemporary discourse, crossed by management conceptual rhetoric, computing architecture and design. Nevertheless, the *platform* concept has already made its entrance in the artistic field since the sixties with the Platform Group, for example, a London-based art group, defined as “interdisciplinary”, or the early film by Yang Zhan Khe named “Platform”(2000), or the concept of theatrical platforms, as Gerald Raunig writes about Tetrajkov’s theatre machines in “A Thousand Machines” (Raunig, 2008).

The platform, in its french *plate-forme*, is **a surface of exchanges**. It also is a plural term for the arts, politics and so on. It can also visualize as something flat, elevated, a frame that also reminds us of a **plateau**. It is horizontal, has lost the verticality of the screen, projected in front of its spectator. Instead, its appearance is a shared space, to pass by, a ringside. If we locate this definition in the digital space, it can work as a **palimpsest**, a board where forms, memories, texts and images, videos can be sedimented, where overlaps can be layered as in a computer structure, as seen in Youtube.com.

If the present logic of this environment were not networks and their connectivities, today a metaphor for social structure (Bauman, 2000, 2013), passing from one to another, but

¹¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computing_platform last accessed March, 2020

instead a layered temporality, we would have a piece of fabric with a texture close to “Histoire(s) du Cinéma” by Jean Luc Godard, (1998). The author worked the appearance of History, this time made of small video patches, poor images in its origin and circulation. Images dispossessed of authorship and authority, ready to be used and useful into the eternal remix and the continuous oblivion (Steyerl, 2009). The artefact that is part of this research was developed as an online platform, to operate within the visual transactions in the screen as a space of encounter for a political visibility, focusing on protest images rescued from the vacant lots of youtube.com, energizing them with a centripetal force.

The platform developed as an **editing table** is an experimental proposal to respond to what Hito Steyerl expresses in “The Articulation of Protest” (2002) as the recreation of a protest as a montage - *“Every articulation is a montage of various elements - voices, images, colours, passions or dogmas - within a certain period of time and a certain expanse in space”*. The development of this artefact has a specific infrastructure to answer to this questionings, framed under the development of the area of audiovisual, multimedia, interactive and creative contents - in a Digital Media context - that leads to a specific object, an [online video platform](#):

“An online video platform (OVP), provided by a video hosting service, enables users to upload, convert, store and playback video content on the Internet, often via a structured, large-scale system that can generate revenue. Users generally will upload video content via the hosting service’s website, mobile or desktop application, or another interface (API). The type of video content uploaded might be anything from shorts to full-length TV shows and movies. The video host stores the video on its server and offers users the ability to enable different types of embed codes or links that allow others to view the video content. The website, mainly used as the video hosting website, is usually called the video-sharing website”. The next explanation also comes with significant relevance - “Purpose of video hosts (for users)”:

- . Save on bandwidth and hosting costs often eliminating costs;
- . Creating a commonplace to share and view video content;
- . Making a user-friendly experience, where uploading a video and streaming or embedding video does not require advanced programming knowledge. It is now commonly achieved through a web browser, and can be done by users with little programming experience”.

The description of the computing interaction is also relevant. In one hand, it describes and explains what an online video platform is composed of, on the other hand, one can envision what such digital artistic artefact can address, questioning and enacting the political potential of this structure.

Here is the description: “Online video platforms can use a software as a service (SaaS) business model, a do it yourself (DIY) model or user-generated content (UGC) model. The OVP comes with an end-to-end toolset to upload, encode, manage, playback, style, deliver, distribute, download, publish and measure the quality of service or audience engagement quality of experience of online video content (...). This is usually manifested as a User Interface with login credentials. OVPs also include providing a custom video player or a third-party video that can be embedded in a website. Modern online video platforms are often coupled up with embedded online video analytics providing video publishers with detailed insights into video performance: the total number of video views, impressions, and unique views; video watch time, stats on user location, visits, and behaviour on the site.”

The functioning of an OVP has a particular focus on the tools that are coupled up with, for example, the analytics tools, concerned with a metrics comprehension of the activity involved. Nevertheless, not long ago, the OVP “*software ideology*” (Galloway, 2013) had another kind of concerns. For example, on the boom of the participatory culture rhetorics, there appeared a set of OVP with the possibility of editing videos, enabling a “*creators perspective*.”¹¹⁶ on these kinds of digital devices. Very close to the exploratory demands and settlement of i-Docs field, there are several reviews on the experimental possibilities of such editors. Those were specific experiments that appeared from a confluence of crucial online architectural systems, formerly mentioned Online Video Platforms, but also an evolution of non-professional Video Editing tables available online.

At a determined moment, such technological affordances were part of cultural and theoretical rhetoric about open digital participatory culture, focusing on its creative audiovisual potential. In November 2012, Sandra Gaudenzi wrote an article “The Zeega Revolution: remake the Internet!”¹¹⁷, describing new software that emerged on those years, 2011 and 2012 (no coincidence) as “*authoring tools*” to create i-docs. The ones referred were *Klynt*,

¹¹⁶ <http://i-docs.org/2012/11/28/the-zeega-revolution/> last accessed in March 2020

¹¹⁷ <http://i-docs.org/2012/11/28/the-zeega-revolution/> last accessed in March 2020

Popcorn Maker, *3WDOC*, *Conductr*, *Storyplanet*, *Galahad* and *Zeega*. There is in the article a comparative chart of these authoring tools¹¹⁸. But the article focus on an interview with one of the creative directors of Zeega.

The tone of necessary modes of interactive creativity at that moment was expressed in that early moment of the 2010s like this: “Our tagline “Remake the Internet” helps indicate what distinguishes Zeega. From the beginning, we have imagined a platform that places innovative storytelling at its centre and truly operates at the scale of transformative web technologies like Tumblr, WordPress, Twitter, etc. We want to make it possible for anyone to experiment with the Web as a creative medium. We believe the Internet is ripe for re-imagining, ready to move beyond the creative frames that have dominated the past decade.”

“Zeega is a dynamic, community-driven ecosystem”. The tool had an integrated media library, for example, for creators to use. Zeega project would provide users to “*be able to easily create collaborative media collections to work on a project*” but with also the “*ability to “produce individual works”, “creating a radically self-organizing commons”*”. *3WDOC* also disappeared, as *Galahad* did. *Klynt* is still available, but it is not an open online video editor, is instead an interactive site developer with a paid service. In Zeega’s case, the lack of funding can be part of the answer about the end of the tool, once it was a scholarship funding project.

Popcorn Maker was discontinued by Mozilla, as the following description explains: “Popcorn Maker was a web app that allowed users to update video with additional content - like links and photos - using a simple drag-and-drop interface. Our friends at the Internet Archive have since adopted Popcorn Maker.”¹¹⁹. Once hosted in archive.org, a clear description is of its functions and potential is provided - “Video/Audio edit projects saved from the migrated Mozilla Popcorn and Popcorn.js code. The javascript-heavy framework allows playing “references” to online assets around the Web, like HTML5 video/audio, youtube, archive.org video/audio and more! It is like an online video player and editor right in your browser, allowing for simple to a complex arrangement of clips, mashups and more. Original assets

¹¹⁸ <https://www.slideshare.net/mariayanez/idsocs-authoring-tools-confronted> this was a slide presentation in the i-Docs conference, last accessed March 2020.

¹¹⁹ <https://foundation.mozilla.org/pt/artifacts/popcorn-maker/>, last accessed March 2020

sources are cited for every asset used. Preservation of these projects in this collection allows them to be seen, reused, and remixed by the world.”¹²⁰

The tool is still available in archive.org, where it is possible to experiment with specific editing features. However, it is an interesting exercise nowadays to use this archived tool and understand that the simple fact of inserting a text on a video clip has an entirely different creative potential, in the complexity of a discourse, in different levels, within various polyphonic elements. This manipulation system was part of the art of Jean Luc Godard, for example, a reference within Georges Didi-Huberman constellation - in “L’Oeil de L’Histoire” with his volume on Jean Luc Godard - “*JLG, Passés Cités*” (2015) - and his system of quotations and references as a new lisibility path through the moving images.

If compared with the possibilities of Youtube.com Creator Studio today, after 2017 transformation, it is comparatively a poorer experience. The importance of non-professional editing tools and its potential as digital literacy skills was the object of research by IRI, Institute de Recherche et d’Innovation, of Centre Georges Pompidou. There - “IRI was created in 2006 by French philosopher Bernard Stiegler as part of the Centre Pompidou to anticipate, accompany and analyze the transformation of cultural practices enabled by digital technologies, and sometimes even to contribute to their very emergence. The institute, now an independent legal entity, primarily explores the field of digital studies, in the sense of a new “organology of knowledge” appearing with the digital, which requires specific studies and concepts. More precisely, the institute investigates the field of cultural and cognitive technologies from a digital humanities point of view, which at IRI is considered to be a specific sector of digital studies.”.¹²¹

This project had a strong emphasis in the development of some tailored computing tools connected with audiovisual archiving and notation, as further explained: “IRI has been developing and experimenting with different contributive platforms: Lignes de temps for films and vidéos, IconoLab for photos, Hypothes.is for texts in combination with innovative publication formats: videos indexed by categorized tweets (polemictweet.com), video -

¹²⁰ <https://archive.org/details/popcornproject?tab=about>, last accessed March 2020

¹²¹ https://www.iri.centrepompidou.fr/?lang=fr_fr/, last accessed March 2020

mashups, mind mapping (Renkan), video-books, hyper-videos, contributive online courses.”¹²²

The importance of cultural technologies and audio, visual and digital knowledge production forms is in part of theoretical research developed within IRI, with some of the thematic lines focusing on “cultural technologies and learning platforms” and also “contributive publishing and social networking”, which reinforces the argument of a conceptual moment, with a perspective of the Web as an open space, made of different relations and interactions on that common ground, participated and apparently inclusive, of the organization of these interactions. Several examples could have germinated into popular software. The examples are design tools as “*timelines*.”¹²³ but also “*HashCut*” - “a hypervideo (clickable video) and a Mashup (mix of media). A Hashcut is a collection of video quotes, put together end-to-end, without altering the original media, and allows everyone to propose a new look, a gateway editorialized on these media” or “Visual Sedimentation js”, “a novel design metaphor for visualizing data streams directly inspired by the physical process of sedimentation”.

The early years of 2010s decade had this tone, between emancipatory Web, academic seminars and creative areas, with a strong focus on participatory and “authoring tools” reinforcing bonds and affirmation of the “*commons*” in a public space of solidarity with a step further into an alternative business model of web commerce.

This cultural moment was coincident with social media generalization and its use, as seen before, in terms of digital social movements. Maybe there are no coincidences and this window of opportunity both in mainstream social media uses and in its niches of cultural and academic production were part of a utopian moment of media-ecologies, what reports us to the momentum of Leonardo Edition, “RED ART, New Utopias in Data Capitalism” volume and its introductory texts by Lanfranco Aceti - “Commonist Art, founded on the whim of the ‘like’ and ‘trend,’ on the common that springs from the aggregation around an image, a phrase, a meme or a video, is able to construct something different, a convergence of opinions and actions that can be counted and weighed and that cannot be taken for granted. Could this be a Gramscian utopia of reconstruction and refashioning of aesthetics according to ‘lower commons’.” (Aceti, 2014)

¹²² https://www.iri.centrepompidou.fr/?lang=en_us last accessed March 2020

¹²³ There are several open-access timeline software, for example, one from Google available services.

The several tools here described, however, made a descendant curve, have even disappeared, making the environment of creative individual online less diverse and the evolution of such enthusiastic art production nests less present and therefore less appealing, in a domestic user perspective. The non-professional editing software, although existent, is more focused on a perspective of free software for editing as professional, than editing systems for individual online expression and creativity, as “liberating kitten memes”, and the predicted Gramscian moment, that the authors fantasized as referred in the volume.

The most popular of online video platforms, Youtube.com Creator Studio, as described before, has changed in the last years, disabling a majority of its creative interaction frameworks in terms of creativity and individual use. Youtube.com has ended Creator’s Studio built-in editing table in many of its possibilities, becoming mainly a frame to uploading commercial driven contents, as its new plugins confirm, or to upload pre-edited videos, focusing on pop-up adds signs.

A current mode of participation hegemonically emerged - to participate means generally to immediate share - no edition, no filters, no distance, no reconstruction, no texts, no montage. Even in a more professionalizing perspective of Youtube.com channels promote **vlogging**, as a contemporary expression of “live talking heads”, where a majority of popularity among channels focuses on vloggers personality or the kind of live adventures presented on the channel, than a taste of libertarian “remix” culture of the early 2000s. A distanced and voluntary gesture of montage faded in its life on the Web, but also a multimedia possibility, once even remix, and appropriation as a promise of online commonality, has been dissolved by software interactions on online video platforms.

This artefact, as a platform of montage, occupies a space where the technological affordances of its architecture try a collective gesture of montage, enabled through the “poor images” of public protests and movements. Such a space proposes an *artist template* where an open, participatory and fragmentary computed system can host a collaborative, collective, expanded documentary, using fragments of digital images, filmed during 2011 uprisings.

As Bill Balaskas affirms in his introductory text, also in “RED ART, New Utopias in Data Capitalism”, the importance of the constitution of a place is crucial in the development of possible utopian cyber topos, responding to a social movement quest of “utopian spaces”: “This aspiration referred not only to economic resources, but also to social roles, democratic

functions, human rights, and – of course – urban spaces. Syntagma Square in Greece, Puerta del Sol in Madrid, Zuccotti Park in New York, as well as some of the most iconic public locations around the world saw diverse, or even ‘irreconcilable’ in some cases crowds demand change. Within the reality of Data Capitalism and its multiple self-generated crises, people increasingly felt that they have now been totally deprived of a place (“topos” in Greek).” (Balaskas, 2014, p.15).

The settlement of such an artefact as this platform film developed in this research is an attempt to propose an experimental space to such utopian artistic experiments. As Balaskas proposes, and this artefact experiments - “Digital art is today in a position to capitalize on the participatory potentialities that have been revealed by the socio-political events that defined the early 2010s. The reconceptualization of cyberspace as a ‘cybertopos’ is a constituent part of this new ground on which people are called to stand and build. Accordingly, the emergence of a culture of ‘post-net participation’ in which digital media transcend physical space by consolidating it (instead of ‘merely’ augmenting it), may allow us to explore “concrete utopias”. (Balaskas, 2014, p.14)

5.5 “Of Other Spaces.”

The importance of placement, continuing to paraphrase Bill Balaskas, resides in questioning cyber utopian topos: “‘Red Art’ can be understood as a tool for the creation of such ‘topoi.’ The lesson that new media artists can learn from the political osmoses catalyzed by the economic crisis is that, in order to be effective, cyberspace should become part of a strategy that combines physical and online spaces, practically and conceptually, whilst taking into account the individual traits of both.” (Balaskas, 2014, p.14). How to develop a topos and a gesture to the survival of these fragments?

As Michel Foucault wrote, instead of History - “its themes of development and suspension, of crisis and cycles, themes of the ever-accumulating past” of the nineteenth century, the twentieth century, present-day at the date, “will perhaps be above all the epoch of space”, of *simultaneity*, *juxtaposition*, “the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed”. The world experience in Foucault terms was transferred from an “a long life develo-

ping through it” to a “network that connects points and intersects”¹²⁴. When we visualize a structure, it occupies a geometry, even if a projected one. Spatialization of our measures is present everywhere in the Twentieth century, and with it comes all the theories on the occupation of territories, mapping and counter-mapping as gestures of power design but also resistance, a settlement with the colonial rule as an archetype of occupation metaphors. One relevant remark, the passage of historical periods no longer is defined as Periods, Ages Eras, but as a diffuse temporality, but very spatialized and quasi-physical turn.

The question is as Foucault points out - “The problem of the human site or living space is not simply that of knowing whether there will be enough space for men in the world (...) but also that of knowing what relations of propinquity, what type of storage, circulation, marking and classification of human elements should be adopted in a given situation in order to achieve a given end. Our epoch is one in which space takes for us the form of relations among sites”. (Foucault, 1984, p.23) Contemporaneity has assumed the network as the social type of relation (Bauman, 2000, 2013) and liquidity with its density and flexibility, the material dynamic of social connectivity.

The heterotopian in Foucault text assumes a concrete space, alternative to utopias, that for the author represents *unreal spaces*, hence “they present society in a perfected form”. Nevertheless, as Lewis Mumford wrote “A Map of the World that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at.” (Lewis Mumford, 1922) and Utopia also becomes a “principle of Hope” as Ernest Bloch enunciated in his monumental work.

How can a digital artefact embody both approaches, temporality and space? How to connect spatial contacts, juxtaposing elements within a temporal arch, that creates different strings of timelines? This artefact presents work through both axes.

Michel Foucault has in his text proposed to concentrate on the real places that exist: “probably in every culture, every civilization, - places that exist and that are formed in the very founding of society - which are something like **counter-sites**, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted” (Foucault, 1984, p.24). These places are heterotopias.

¹²⁴ In Foucault terms, even Structuralism “*is the effort to establish, between elements that could have been connected on a temporal axis, an ensemble of relations that makes them appear as juxtaposed (...) as a sort of configuration*”. The Structuralism, besides Philosophy History, is also the visualization of the ordination of space.

Let us start with one of the enlightening examples of heterotopias the author chose, one that lays on the third principle of heterotopias, the capacity to “*juxtaposing in one single real space, several sites that are in themselves incompatible*”. Furthermore, this principle is supported by the example of theatrical presentation, performance, cinema or a projected space of screen on the cinema room. Michel Foucault also described the garden's example, of traditional Persian garden: “(...) a sacred space that was supposed to bring together inside its rectangle four parts representing the four parts of the world.” What is also interesting is the projection of this space, its virtuality, in the carpets - “they were originally reproductions of gardens (the garden is a rug onto which the whole world comes to enact symbolic perfection, and the rug is a sort of garden that can move across space)”.

This artefact aims to develop such spatiality, such as counter-site. This artefact is an Online Video Platform, that recreates an *alter Youtube.com*, where, as a garden recreates a representation of the focus world, a participatory community, unique, virtual and symbolic, and, on the other, the carpet represents a mobile, actualized in different spaces, as the users enter the platform, each one in their own space.

The fourth principle of Foucault is a relation between heterotopias and heterochronies, meaning that “heterotopias are most often linked to slices in time - which is to say that they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies. The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time”. Thus, in the case of this artefact, the question of temporality is developed as a conscience of connection with the strings of time, through paths and dots of spaces.

On the one hand, the platform entangles fragments of spaces, visual presences of events. On the other, it reenacts a temporality of protest, of the uprisings, Furio Jesi perpetual “untimeliness of revolt”, where a “suspension of historical time” has “to find refuge in the symbolic space and time of revolt” (Jesi, 2014, p.54). It is transferred to the temporality of the platform, where no longer the event as past is perceived. However, at the same time, the presentness is the possibility of a possibility, which incorporates a future. When someone uploads its materials of a protest, records a self-portrait and edits and share these timelines in a collective mosaic the fragments of spaces and the dots of time create a new weft.

5.6 Boro Accumulation



image 40 - Boro futon cover, (Mid to Late 19th Century), © Les Ateliers Courbet¹²⁵

The platform intends in its patchwork of interface design to recreate the dynamics of time and space organization of the materials of an ancient Japanese sewing technique. The objective of this platform is to constitute itself as a Boro tissue. This is a technique that refers to clothing in Japan and consists of several darning patches of tissues in layers that accumulate, with visible fragments contours and also visible sewing lines. Until the 20th-century this technique was common on rural and poor areas, where it was used through different generations, sewing and re-sewing and patching along their personal life stories.

The first contact with this technique was through an exhibition, “Boro: Life tissue” (MUDE, 2014), an itinerancy of original exhibition in Domaine du Bois Buchet, in 2013. The political and aesthetic impact of such technique comes with the explanation: “Boro textiles were the domain of the ordinary man and represented a collective, impoverished past. They were largely forgotten after the mid-twentieth century when Japan’s society shifted towards mass-scale modernization and urbanization. However, they are the tangible embodi-

¹²⁵ <https://www.ateliercourbet.com/boro-tapestries/stephen-szczepanek-boro-shikimono>

ment of a cultural legacy which has only recently been accorded a formal name and has received critical consideration. (...). **Boro** – derived from the Japanese onomatopoeic "boro boro", which means something tattered or repaired, demonstrates esteem for our available resources, labour and everyday objects.” An appropriation to experiment as a concept and a template, used as a canvas to transform a weft of videos and para-texts into a patchwork of video fragments.

This is also an approach to spatial montage, a term taken from "The Language of New Media" where Lev Manovich writes about interactive cinema and emergent cultural interfaces for the 21st-century. In this work, the author distinguishes spatial from temporal montage: “whilst twentieth century film practice has elaborated complex techniques of montage with different images replacing each other in time, the possibility of what can be called a 'spatial montage' of simultaneously co-existing images has not been explored as systematically” (Lev Manovich, 2001, p.323)

Visualization here corresponds to a canvas, where can be seen lines, paths, overlays as in a ring where patches organize themselves and the movements leave their traces. The platform exposes its contours and appears as an interface that does not *in-visualize* its politics and its temporality, but on the contrary, shows how it is constituted, with what materials and practices”. The approach to the construction of the platform, in what matters software architecture and the interface design is also part of a strategy developed upon a critical reflection and creation on audiovisual, digital and interactive concepts.

Alexander Galloway in his essay “Software and Ideology”, part of “The Interface Effect” (Galloway, 2012) works from Wendy Hui Kyong Chun’s text “On Software and the Persistence of Visual Knowledge”(Wendy Chun, 2005). Alexander Galloway drafts upon the question: “For Chun, the interface between software and ideology is a throwback: it is visual knowledge that persists inside the software. Thus one might assume that the visual quality of knowledge is the key to the software/ideology puzzle”.(Galloway, 2012, p.61).

Computer, as a digital meta medium, is at the same time visually omnipresent, representing imagery of cleanness, openness and efficiency, relating to a visual culture of transparency and access from technology corporations. However, the computer object can be very thick and opaque, paradoxically, following Chun. The cultural domain works with *images* that are not necessarily only visible ones (Belting, 2003). “*Thus, the enlightenment episteme,*

which unites (some might say collapses) knowledge and the visual in various technologies of representational transparency and communicability persists in software, argues Chun, not only because of the conceptualizations and “sightings” just mentioned but also to the extent that it promotes a depth model of representation between sources and surfaces, scripts and screens, the code and users”(Galloway, op.cit.p.62).

A Boro platform is a construction upon the visible and its politics with a consequence on the visual. The interface of the “mosaic view” of the platform has this final visuality:

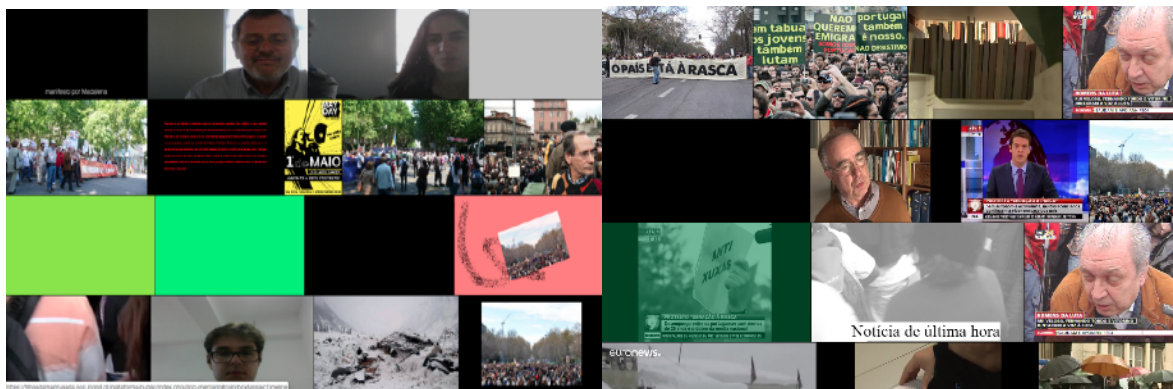


image 41 - composite of still frames from mosaic view, <https://filhosdamadrugada.ncg.ingrid.pt/plataforma/public/index.php/documentario>

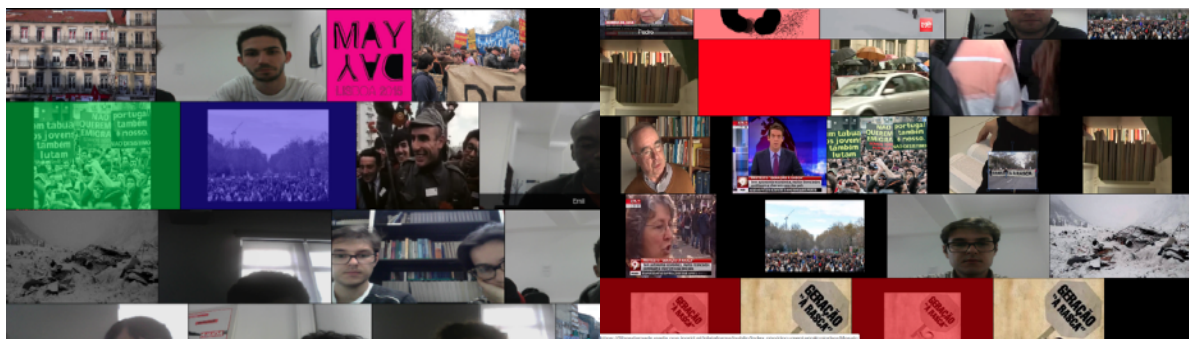


image 42- composite of still frames from mosaic view, <https://filhosdamadrugada.ncg.ingrid.pt/plataforma/public/index.php/documentario>

5.7 Appearance of Multitudes - Collective Portraits | Precarious Subject

In “Peuples Exposés, Peuples Figurants”(Les Éditions du Minuit, 2012) the fourth volume of L’Oeil de L’Histoire, Georges Didi-Huberman lead us to reflecting upon Arendtian theme of the appearance of the human.

“Espérer voir un homme, ce serait donc remettre en jeu la nécessité d’une reconnaissance de l’autre” (Didi-Huberman, 2012, p. 13) - In its resemblance and language, writes Didi-Huberman. But possibly meaning also, in its *images* and its *expressions*. We can reflect upon the remnants of our contemporaneity that constitute appearance as much as our *faces*.

Nevertheless, the importance of appearance, in Arendt terms, as discussed previously by Butler, focuses the space where politics and appearance take place: “it is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word, namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men (sic) exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly” (Butler, 2011). From the question of appearance, some other questions follow: What digital form can take collective political appearance? In what materials is it fixed, with what scale? In this research, also takes place a questioning of the contemporary digital environment, where online and digital image production continues captive of a rhetoric founded in an infinity of media resources¹²⁶.

Walter Benjamin, in Didi-Huberman readings, introduces a question of lisibility of images, from his “Petite Histoire de la Photographie”, where the link between words and images becomes relational, dialectical, and then critical. From this perspective, the reading of the images opens up as part of its possible affection to the world. “Comment faut-il, dès lors, entendre cet apparaître politique, cet apparaître des peuples?”. How to bring this question under the digital image regime? A shift should also be made, “peuples” in contemporaneity embody the concept of multitudes. The multitudes oscillate between each individual and a non compacted crowd, appearing as the subject of the events, but at the same time, as individual identities, that shape a singular presence rather than embodying a mass.

To achieve such state of oscillation, between the two poles, the individual or singular and the group the platform incorporates two different proposals of participation: The first focus is on a contribution to the creation of a collective film, through participation with the edition of a timeline, in the tailored editing table, dealing with a pleiad of images of crowds on the streets, in the protest events to which the footages refer. On the other hand, the image of the face, the self-portrait, in digital times the *selfie*, recording an interview with the web-cam of the computer device.

¹²⁶ This can be a metaphor for our conceptualization and further use of Web information resources, with the consequent difficulties of comprehension or efficiency of learning.

This interview is an interaction with the self, as a self-portrait within a layered structure of a game. The sum of the whole interviews will become another boro fabric of faces, interrogations and answers, with personal lexicon and grammars, but with collective meaning. This also takes a journey in the “selfieization” of expression. At this moment, as Lev Manovich accounts, an enormous amount of selfies are taken every minute, and what will happen to this amount of data?¹²⁷.

The face portrait imagery is in the artefact arranged as a reverse angle of a screen mediated self-performance, under the heavy veil of precariousness as the horizon in contemporary subjects. Also, deepening the concept of “*selfie as visual paradox*” of Ana Peraica in “Culture of the Selfie” (Peraica, 2016), as long as exploring and confronting differences between self-portrait and selfie. This part of the artefact is a development of another web media art project, developed during the doctoral research seminar, Laboratório dos Media, called “Auto-Retratos Digitais como Entrevista de Emprego” - <http://fabricadesites.fcsh.unl.pt/auto-retratos/>.

An interview game puts a self confronted with the subjectivity of being an object and subject under evaluation. The precarious regime is pervasive as seen in Isabell Lorey “The State of Insecurity”(Verso, 2015) and Alex Foti (Institute of Network Cultures, 2017). Furthermore, labour precarity has been the frontline of the invasive precarity mass regime. The site is a journey of self-interrogation, where the user can exercise an interview with the five most common questions used in job interviews. Those questions that are on the limit of “Human Resources” lexicon and intimacy. The site was developed in a sometimes difficult venture through the free software for non-professional websites developers, in this case, WordPress. Despite the technical setbacks, the prototype is implemented.

One of the main references to this work was, as the motto proposed by Professor João Mário Grilo, the proto-multimedia self-portrait film by Jean Luc Godard “JLG/JLG, autoportrait de décembre”, 1994. A kaleidoscopic film, on the fragmentation of the subject, but also the polysemy of media, the rooms, the books, the quotations, the landscapes, not filmed as a filmic continuum, or coherence, but rather as parcelled entities of a constituent community of aesthetic means. Also in the History of contemporary cinema, Robert Kramer’s monologue in

¹²⁷Lev Manovich work on the selfie is expressed in the project, <http://selfiecity.net/> - that entitles itself: “Selfcity investigates selfies using a mix of theoretic, artistic and quantitative methods” - last accessed March 2020.

the hotel's bathroom, "10/90" (1990) was part of a personal imaginary of disruptive cinematographic self-portraits.



image 43 - "[autoretratos digitais. autoretrato como entrevista de emprego](http://fabricadesites.fcsh.unl.pt/autoretratos/)"¹²⁸, Madalena Miranda, 2016

This work expresses a Web composition of digital images of precarious faces as in "Faces" (John Cassavetes, 1968). Faces are unique, faces are singular, faces are recognizable. A face is a knot on the navigation of the weft of collective images. We fix points in faces, and they become guiding marks through a flow of digital imagery. They become part of body politics of the streets, as Butler wrote about, but also of virtual landscapes. As Giorgio Agamben described, a face can be a revelation of language, but also of power, politics, separating things and images, pursuing recognition, and with that possession of their appearance, of its "truth". This is a space of politics. As such: "the face is the *simultas*, the being-together of the manifold visages constituting it, in which none of the visages is truer than any of the others. To grasp the face's truth means to grasp not the resemblance but rather the simultaneity of the visages, that is, the restless power that keeps them together and constitutes their being-in-common". (Giorgio Agamben, 1994, p.98). Singular or plural, the face communicates its exterior and interiority continuously. Furthermore, the encounter of faces, a recognition of a plurality of faces become potential.

It also expresses resistance, once a face is a solitude, in its uniqueness. As some YouTube images found in this research, or those masterfully put together in Natalie Bookchin's films. In the artist and filmmaker projects like "Laid Off" (2009) or more lugubrious "My Meds"(2009). The solitude of the *vlogger*, in the interior of a room, no external reference to punctuate time.

¹²⁸ <http://fabricadesites.fcsh.unl.pt/autoretratos/>, last accessed March 2020

A remembrance of “Three Studies for a Self-Portrait” (1979-1980) by Francis Bacon - As Bacon remarked to David Sylvester in 1975, *“I loathe my own face. . . . I have done a lot of self-portraits, really because people have been dying around me like flies and I have nobody else left to paint but myself.”*¹²⁹



image 44 - “Three Studies for a Self-Portrait”, (Francis Bacon, 1979-1980)

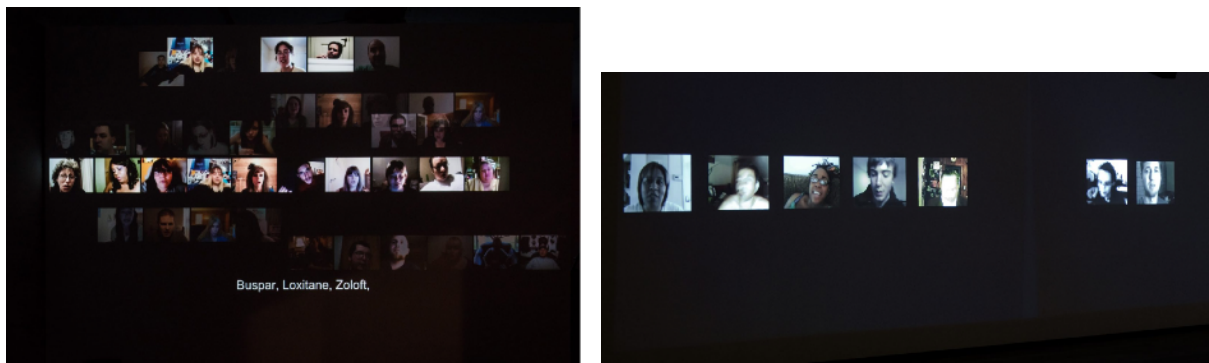


image 45 - “Laid Off” (2009), “Testament”(2009), © Natalie Bookchin

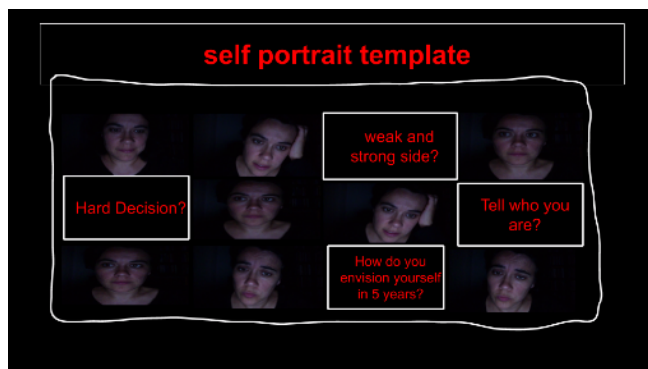


image 46 - still frame from self portrait layout page version of the artifact

¹²⁹ <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/489966> - last accessed March 2020.

As Didi-Huberman continues reading Hannah Arendt, an answer was sketched from four paradigms: *visages*, *multiplicities*, *differences* and *intervals*. Didi-Huberman refers to “people” and “peuples”. The first is flat and flattened by a power discourse that does not cut singularities. The second reproduces, recreates possibilities, enframing not only the occupation of spaces but also temporal repetitions. Meaning, “les peuples” are not as represented as “the people”, and therefore freer. For this Didi-Huberman writes about multiplicities, “*tout cela fait une foule innombrable de singularités*”. Movements, desires, words, actions. As the politics of the streets and the uprisings. A perpetual movement of multitudes.

Differences and the *intervals* are the sewing lignes of the patchwork, the edges of the editing. “L’apparaître politique est donc une apparition de différences”, says Didi-Huberman, and quotes from Arendt “La politique traite de la communauté et de la réciprocité d’êtres différents.”¹³⁰ As differences that can be juxtaposed and identified, the spaces between, different types of sewing, become the space of relation, intervals. “*Penser la communauté et la réciprocité de ces êtres différents revient donc, (...) à penser l’espace politique comme le réseau des intervalles qui ajoutent les différences entre elles*”. (Didi-Huberman, 2012 p. 25). And again Arendtian political space appears, “the space between”, something exterior that becomes out of body, or can we say, part of the collective body.

From the work of the photograph Philippe Bazin, Didi-Huberman takes the material proofs to recreate aesthetic manifestations and cross the transversal path embodying the experience, this time in digital modes. “Faces” from 1985-1986 is the troubling photographic persistence of “des aspects humains” in an elder care centre. On another set of this photograph, “Nés”(1998-1999) develops a counter-image of such community of images. For Didi-Huberman these are gestures that reconstitute the “parcels d’humanité”. Along with these gestures, the possibility of the portrait and the collective. “Restituer à chaque singularité la clarté de son aspect, réunir en séries les “parcelles d’humanité” ainsi exposées” (Didi-Huberman, 2012, p. 52). They are assumed as a “*community of faces*”, hence the **group portrait**. This group portrait is the connection between several dots, the faces, the events, the movements, the communities, the “*peuples*”.

¹³⁰ Quotation from H. Arendt, “Qu’est-ce que la politique?” (1950-1959), trad. S. Courtine-Denamy, Paris, Le Seuil, 1995, (éd. 2001), p.39. in Didi-Huberman, Georges, “Peuples Exposés, Peuples Figurants”, Paris, Editions du Minuit, 2012.

However, to see a people, or to expose a group, is also under extreme political conditions of a common struggle that can happen, as uprisings on social movements, where appearance can happen, emotional and public, politic and aesthetic. As Brecht defended in “Sur l’art ancien et l’art nouveau” (Bertolt Brecht, 1970), according to Didi-Huberman - “l’humanité ne s’appréhende qu’à révéler sa dimension - et, trop souvent, sa violente dimension - historique, sociale, collective, politique”. With this in mind, the form of collective portrait can condense the result of a montage, an assemblage of moments of uprising. Why is the collective appropriation of the street a righteous moment for a collective portrait? Why is the shape of protest an image of plurals? Butler answers to this question with the presence of “bodies in alliance” on the streets, occupying the spaces of the struggles. (Judith Butler, “Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street, 2011).

This argument can transit to another space to occupy, a space of circulation of images, a space of cinema and within this space, constitute an emancipatory visibility. To a political space of visibility on the street, can then correspond a political space of visibility on memory, in the space of construction of visual memory. This is the aim of this **artist platform**, expanding the action and intervention on collective by digital and artistic means. Although the successes of “their” revolutions, some films, in a tension between film and essay, brought to light the politics of cinema, from its most structural machine, montage.

5.8 Articulation of Protest | Artist Montage

5.8.1 “Le Fond de L’Air est Rouge”, the montage of memory, the memory as montage

“Les véritables auteurs de ce film, bien que pour la plupart ils n’aient pas été consultés sur l’usage fait ici de leurs documents, sont les innombrables cameramen, preneurs de son, témoins et militants dont le travail s’oppose sans cesse à celui des Pouvoirs, que nous voudrions sans mémoire.”

Chris Marker, “Le Fond de L’Air est Rouge” (1978)

The films addressed next do not create in themselves a corpus of political cinema or montage cinema. Instead, they address the author’s own memory of images of collective pro-

test, a crystallisation in the film of a politics of portrait and memory by the following authors. The triangle of films constitutes different references to different essential knots of the artefact development process. The first moment, the one that addresses montage as a process of memory and memory as a process of montage. The second, the ubiquity of an uprising as a collective form and the cinematographic montage as its configuration grammar. The third, the example of the authorial viewpoint or “Where do I stand?” questioning in Thomas Hirschhorn terms.

The first reference to the creation of the platform film is the “opus magna” **“Le Fond de l’Air est Rouge”**, (1972) by Chris Marker. The letters in red in a black background announce “Scenes from the third world war”. The first part, “*the fragile hands*” with its beautiful sequence of all the hands in the air in the demonstrations, relates with precarious days of contemporary politics and the “*fragile hands*” resonate as “precarious hands” of “precarious life” of work and struggle. A film described by Chris Marker as “un film de montage concernant les sept dernières années, et particulièrement sous l’angle des modulations et métamorphoses du thème révolutionnaire dans le monde actuel”.

Other important aspect of this film as a reference to the development of the digital artefact is its continuous remaking process from 1978 to 2008, when a final DVD edition was made. In the portal of the French Film Documentaire, the film page description goes with the words of Annick Peigné-Giuly, “Réalisée en 1977, remontée en 1998, cette saga de la gauche vue par Chris Marker résonne dans les décennies qui suivent mai 68. Les années Mitterrand, les années sida... L’actualité d’une œuvre aujourd’hui encore mise en jeu. En trois heures et deux volets, Chris Marker retrace dix années d’histoire de la gauche, des révoltes aux exercices de l’État. Un magistral montage d’archives qui utilise les images de témoins "dont le travail s’oppose sans cesse à celui des pouvoirs, qui nous voudraient sans mémoire". Cette mémoire est celle des utopies et de leur fin, de la fin de siècle des idéologies. La chronique lyrique et mélancolique d’un échec qui pèse sur le monde contemporain. Le fond de l’air est grave, comme le dit aujourd’hui Marker”¹³¹. What better environment to continue the experimentation of such modes of production as the Web, this its apparent infinite weft of patchwork images?

¹³¹ http://www.film-documentaire.fr/4DACTION/w_fiche_film/3023_0, last accessed in March 2020

The film is a reference, not only because of its revolutionary point of view but because of its revolutionary failure, as Eisenstein's "Cuirassé *Potemkin*" (1925) example, the first reference in Marker's film. Although uncanny, the energy of the protests overcomes the walls of History. The memories of the film seem to talk to its present, as a remembrance. It works as a past that also relates to a non defined future. A relevant conceptual achievement from a theoretical point of view - It works within the margins of collective memory and from its present reenacts an atemporal time, expanding it through the "articulation" of the film as past projected in the future.

The elements of montage organise themselves around a gravitation of fragments that at the same time with the right distance and bonds create such corpus. Real footage, voice-over with a reflexive discourse and propeller sound effects, over different coloured images, creates an intense and epic object, replicating its own grandeur in its length and duration—the historical corpus of Vietnam, South America and Checoslovaquia, May, Paris. The labouring of the film along with its montage machine is a significant reference the development of this research of its digital artefact, or platform film, on figuring how to recreate within the techniques of *digitalness*, the political montage machine of collective images. "And from that emerged what was to be known as the New Left, but perhaps what people noticed less at the time was the emergence of the New Right" someone whispers on our ear.

The "grin without a cat" or "le fond de l'air est rouge" have today another level of opacity, the technological one—the power struggle of the apparatus. The machine and its technical conditions present and expose itself as strengths and weaknesses. Technological affordances are at the same time, its blocking possibilities. "Le Fond de L'Air est Rouge" is a comparative approach to the images and a distance from the events. Somehow there is a similar distance to experiment in the Web and online digital temporality. The artefact of this research was developed as a platform film to assume this distanced space and time, recreating a necessary reflection to "articulate a montage", at the same time a montage of events and a montage of memories.

Montage reorganises individual footage, experiences and discourses. With the dissolvent materials of digital "poor" and precarious images. The dissolvent materials of digital objects and consequent digital subjects. Those invisible "poor images" through the ideology of the interaction of software. "Le Fond de L'Air est Rouge" occupies in the History of Cinema

a unique place, as a catalyst of this study and work, the particular place of a resonance box. The initial sequence is a synthesis and a synecdoche. The remembrance of “Battleship Potemkin”, as heard in the voice-over, was a memory of reconstitution of an uprising, taking us to the circular timeliness of cinema.

The remembrance exercise appears from montage with a voice-over and fragments of other films. It inscribes a grammar. The Odessa Stairs, Vakulinchuk, “the man with the moustache”. “Brothers” and then an irruption of the epic sequence of the hands in the air. We can almost perceive memory at work. Memory and remembrance can become political. If to a memory corresponds an image, and if to an image corresponds a crystalised action to arise, or make appear, a memory or a political image is needed. In memory and cinema, as presented before, space-time can correspond to the space and time of the uprising, the untimeliness temporality not of Revolution, but of occupation, of the barricade or “acampada”. The space, also concentrated, reflects the atemporal time, with different rhythms.



image 47 - composite of still frames from “Le Fond de l’Air est Rouge”(1978), © Chris Marker¹³²

5.8.2 “*Videograms of a Revolution*”, the collective media film

The second film to be considered as a model for an experimental methodology to this artefact is “*Videograms of a Revolution*” (1992) by Harun Farocki and Andrei Ujica. The film is presented in Harun Farocki site by the words of Dietrich Leder “In Europe in the fall of 1989, History took place before our very eyes. Farocki and Ujica’s Videograms shows the

¹³² <http://www.jeudepaume.org/index2014.php?page=article&idArt=2740>

Rumanian Revolution of December 1989 in Bucharest in a **new media-based form of historiography**.¹³³ The viewpoint of the film, or rather, its breakpoint, is a focus on differentiated media, the *zeitgeist media* of those days: television and video camera recorders. The plot that organises the backbone of the film drafts upon “Demonstrators occupied the television station (in Bucharest) and broadcast continuously for 120 hours, thereby establishing the television studio as a new historical site. Between December 21, 1989 (the day Ceaucescu last speech) and December 26, 1989 (the first televised summary of his trial), the cameras recorded events at the most important locations in Bucharest, almost without exception”.

There was a concentration in this historical moment on two poles. In this case, a consequent Revolution: the occupation and the uprising in the streets. This makes the interaction of the film exceptional. In Ujica own words “The determining medium of an era has always marked History, quite unambiguously so in that of modern Europe. It was influenced by theatre from Shakespeare to Schiller, and later on by literature, until Tolstoi. As we know, the 20th century is filmic. However, only the video camera, with its heightened possibilities in terms of recording time and mobility, can bring the process of filming History to completion. Provided, of course, that there is history”. (Andrei Ujica quoted by Dietrich Leder).

The method presented by Harun Farocki was described “If, at the outbreak of the uprising only one camera dared to record, hundreds were in operation on the following day”(Harun Farocki quoted by Dietrich Leder). The connections of Andrei Ujica with Romanian public television broadcaster “opened up the television archives to the authors but also enabled them to get in contact with cameramen from state film studios and with numerous amateur videographers who had documented the events on the streets of Bucharest, often from the roofs of highrise buildings”, as some crucial sequences evidence when the uprising started.

The film can be thought of as a prototype of later social movements, as of 2011. When filming, the streets have become exponential and not only by people related to media or trained professionals that accessed the cameras but rather by those who were enabled with standard devices to renew “*media-based historiography*”. This film is a prototype for this aesthetic and political intervention. The “articulation of the protest” concept in Farocki and Ujica film happens in doubled spaces of the streets and the editing table and emission of the

¹³³ <https://www.harunfarocki.de/films/1990s/1992/videograms-of-a-revolution.html>, last accessed March 2020

tv studios, the occupied square and the occupied television. The protests, like montage, are a flow between the reconstitution of the events and the performance of diffusion, and the convergence of streets in the television studios, becomes a collective mediation of historical events and video images.



image 48 - still frames from “Videograms of a Revolution”(1992), Harun Farocki, Andrei Ujica

The media-based form of historiography that Andrei Ujica refers evolved in digital culture to a media-based form of the uprising. With a deeper extension, once media-based historiography has transformed in the digital realm to an autonomic media *subject-system*, with a mastery of the full process, since filming with mobile phones, free accessible editing software and online video platforms that make the whole workflow low fi and easy to share. The decentred eyes and action of multiple individuals constitute the collective “partage of the sensible”. Starting with Arab Springs, and its powerful images, a momentum of a self historian as politician arrived through digital practices. Also remarkable here is Chun’s “habitual new media” concept, that made possible, with an appropriation of leisure technology, it is politically used. The film is also a prototype of a promise. Like a future synopsis: “What if there would be a way for everybody to film and share globally images of protest?”

Youtube, the most used free online video platform, mobile devices with an incorporated camera and an internet connection made it possible. Technological affordances of media-consuming devices have turned to become important tools of resistance, of political action, once at its core function, they are fundamental elements of creating an appearance, of mediation, of communication. The film exposes these dialectical forces of media and mediation,

when conflict is also present, once it is apparent. One important characteristic of this film that has been transported to experiment in the present artefact.

The structural device where dialectical forces between the streets uprisings and occupation coexist and reappear is the **editing table**. Which is a converging working grid of cinema. In the sequences where the montage of the film appears, subsequently are expressed an essay and a political reflection, but also a historical understanding of the events. The film works from the viewpoint of the editing table. The scenes are run back and forward, as the events, the points of view, the moments. The rooftop, the occupation of the palace, the attempt to escape of Ceausescu.

The artefact developed in this study focuses its central action in the *act of montage*, with an editing table to use on the platform film site. To edit is to cut, to separate, to gather, to overlap, to colour, to write, to draw, to rewrite, to redraw, to sonorise, to record, to speak, to mute. These are actions of presence, closeness and distance, of temporal and spatial projections, recreations of temporalities and spatialities. Actions of understanding, emotional and rational experience of the world. What more can be said to encapsulate the scent, the cardiac rhythm of such act. To edit is to sculpt the crystal.

The centrality of montage exposes and expands, as the conception of Georges Didi-Huberman in the second volume of “L’Oeil de L’Histoire”, “Remontages du Temps Subi” (2010). It is part of a lisibility of images as a historical possibility, dedicated with profound admiration to the work of Harun Farocki as an “interlocuteur” of “le temps subi” with his gesture of “ouvrir les temps, armer les yeux”. Even though the volume does not address the film of Romanian Revolution directly, Farocki’s method is analysed and can be transported to fundament this platform film as structural to the development of a digital artefact of activist montage.

The method to “réapprendre” is under Farocki epistemological regimen, “cette forme cinématographique particulière qu’est le film en tant qu’essai”. (Didi-Huberman, 2010, p.92). It is this method that comes with a core architecture of this artefact. Whereas in Farocki’s work - “l’experimentation et la pensée - tiennent d’abord à une certaine façon de montage contrapunctique des images entre elles, des images avec les sons, voire des différents médias utilisés ensemble”(Didi-Huberman, 2010, p.92). What Christa Bluminger describes as inherent to a passage between media, cinema, video, photography.

As possible arrangements within the editing table of this platform film, the assemblages, or concatenations of different media redesign their limits, possibilities and intervals. Editing was for Harun Farocki a creative and reflexive process - “le montage était pour lui la forme nécessaire pour que “les choses avancent”. At the same time, Farocki's montage was an exposition, and in the case of this artefact, that coincides with a collective exposition. The editing table as a place of reappearance.

This gesture traces the filmmaker montage dialectics as an intelligible corpus, not only of political and protest images, not a gap between image and text, not even between two images in a sequence, two contact points of attractions. Montage will be expanding, precarious and contradictory, becoming an event where the spectator, hopefully also a creator, will confront with the open possibilities of “a montage qui au contraire, arrêta le récit, l'exposait, le diffractait, le dialectisait en cristaux qui se répondent ou se contredisent sur place sans solution.” (Didi-Huberman, 2010, p.93) This spectator and producer are, as Didi-Huberman writes, someone that assumes his task of exposing History, as it is, an emergent figure of digital culture.

Do these questions reside in how to propose these agents of History to embody this task? Imposing, agreeing with the technological magnitude of the digital, accepting the ideological software enclosures? Farocki central parable of the editing table as working table is open and emancipatory, inclusive, and although its conception as a lens through the fragmented experience it does not minor or reduces it. Instead, it widens the crystal and the possibility of its comprehension.

Is the montage an essay and an essay a montage? An essay, recurring to Adorno's thesis “Essay as Form”, where montage takes the place of the method. For Didi-Huberman is the recuperation of Benjaminian analysis of Brecht's epic theatre as “analyses de la méthode brechtienne par Walter Benjamin sous l'angle du document, du recadrage, du décalage et, donc, du démontage-remontage expérimental de toutes choses”. (Didi-Huberman, 2010, p. 94). For Adorno, rules were disruptive to the “strictes catégories logico-discursives”, but instead as a “montage d'images” becoming an open form, that does not embody a conceptual proposition of a theoretical totality. For Didi-Huberman, as the dialectical image in Benjamin, where solidification of conflictual movement is part of the essence of essay and political image. This conception transports Didi-Huberman to a conception of montage - “Comme dans tout mon-

tage également - au sens qui fut celui de Vertov et d'Eisenstein, au sens qui demeure celui de Godard et de Farocki". For Didi-Huberman, essay as montage inherits a space of multiplication of the senses and singularities of meanings, "comme dans tout montage, les césures et les transitions diront l'essentiel". ((Didi-Huberman, 2010, p.95).



image 49 - still frames from "Videograms of a Revolution"(1992), Harun Farocki, Andrei Ujica

The essay as the montage are metaphors of the garden of Michel Foucault. "the essay urges the reciprocal interaction of its concepts in the process of intellectual experience. In the essay, concepts do not build a continuum of operations, and thought does not advance in a single direction, rather the aspects of the argument interweave as in a carpet. The fruitfulness of the thoughts depends on the density of this texture". (Adorno, T, "Essay as Form", in "New German Critique, No. 32 (Spring-Summer, 1984), pp. 151-171, Duke University Press, p. 160).

5.8.3 "*As Armas e o Povo*", the filmmaker as a "mediator."

One other reference to this project remounts to Portuguese cooperative film "*As Armas e o Povo*"(Colectivo dos Trabalhadores da Actividade Cinematográfica,1975), produced and signed collectively by a cinema cooperative, that appeared during the revolutionary period, after the Carnation coup. The cooperative worked with some television assignments, most of those, directors, photographers, sound directors were connected with the Portuguese movement of Cinema Novo, with names as cinematographer Acácio de Almeida and filmmakers as Fernando Lopes, Alberto Seixas Santos or Fernando Matos Silva. However, in those days,

there appeared also some cultural cooperatives, bringing to the artistic domain a collective politics dynamics observed in other sectors of the economy¹³⁴.

To what matters, the process of production of the film is relevant, once it was part of a collective self-conscience movement of witnessing a unique moment. That moment was the **1st May** demonstration, only some days after the Carnation coup occurred, on April 25 1974. It was a historical event, a large demonstration with symbolic representation, also a cathartic moment, where all major political actors of Portuguese resistance were present, recently arrived from exile and relation of forces of their leaders happened during the demonstration, with some historical speeches, all filmed by a ubiquitous team.

Despite the historical facts, the film is also a landmark by its inner entanglements. The modes of production, first of all. The camera operators went to the demonstration and filmed from several perspectives on the celebratory streets of Lisbon. The second is the gesture these filmmakers had to restore people's voice, the possibility for those silenced for years to speak for themselves. Although the sequence of speeches unbalances the film, these people through the live camera are an emotional, political live portrait of those days and a collective memory moment.

Glauber Rocha presence in this film embodies a definition of the role of the filmmaker as a mediator. With his physical closeness to the people in the streets as a reference. The filmmaker interpellates and convokes people's attention. Some react happily, some outburst their lifetime miseries, and some, as the scene of the woman behind bars, reveal wisdom about present and future, with a grid among her and the others, talking about a future which she doubts it can change. The older man, almost blind that everybody wanted to speak for him, but the camera waited for his voice: the military and the black soldier also a presence, visibility.

Can the figure of Glauber Rocha assume the balance of mediator, an aspiration of Arendtian "between"? Didi-Huberman wrote about Harun Farocki, the interlocutor. This is also a role the author assumes in this artefact. In this film, Glauber Rocha represents the link to the "people", that makes possible to present themselves, to appear. This research drafted upon identification with this artistic ethic, framing and enabling the other, but enabling thorough montage and addressing the techniques of digital culture, concatenating the interactive

¹³⁴ during the revolutionary period the cooperative movement had a transversal impact in the economic sectors, from agriculture, to industry and to the cultural production houses too. Several were formed during these years.

collective with the online video platform. Glauber Rocha in this film is also, in Vandana Shiva terms, “a polliniser”, transporting the richness of pollen like that of freedom enthusiasm.



image 50 - still frames from “As Armas e o Povo”, (1975), Colectivo dos Trabalhadores da Actividade Cinematográfica

The facilitator here was to design the template, to shape an authorial space to the vernacular community. Not to fill with the content but to design the borders. Into the development of a digital artefact to respond to a questioning of a collective digital portrait of protest moments, where the political appearance of “peoples” emerged, the role of the filmmaker, or the researcher has been taken as an interlocutor, a middle piece, a template designer as refer-

red—the template as design response to multiple theoretical questionings. The results should envision evolving imagery that is made of multiple images, discourses, emotions, sharing.

To put the template to work, with its flows and user experiences was along with the theoretical rationale, the author's journey. This procedure dilutes authorship, significance or meaning and from the process. Thus, dealing with technological needs and constraints, with a horizon in mind. Even if the code does not entirely work, the cardboard mold is done. The abstract machine works.

The next section intends to describe some of the tools designed explicitly within this artefact. These are editing tools, that happen to create specific cinematic effects. The next set of films reflect certain aspects of this design. The importance of sound, in the first example, enables a parallel with the interface design of sound use in a platform like Youtube.com. The second example inquires the pictorial entity of the film, and its composition within textual and visual layouts as part of the configuration of the screen or canvas. The last example reminds the impact of chromatic re-appropriation of footage but also a prototype of an “analytical” camera and their procedures, as an object that also transverses aesthetics and propositions like Thomas Hirschhorn “Critical Laboratory”.

5.8.4 The polyphony of multitudes

One observation about Youtube.com editing functionalities is related to the use of sound. Sound files like wave, mp3, not even before Creator Studio changes in 2017, could be imported directly from other sources to the platform editing table. The only sound files that could and still can, be imported to editing projects on Creator Studio, are music files like mp3. The platform has a commercial focus in the music distribution industry, which allows users and “creators” to musical their videos with songs from available playlists on the platform for that effect.

For example, when a creator wants to work the audio layer of a video, audio files can not be imported to the timeline, from personal archive, nor to be uploaded to the dashboard. The [Youtube.com technical support page](#) about formats explains it like this:

“Note: Audio Files, like MP3, WAV or PCM cannot be uploaded to Youtube. You can use video editing software to convert your audio file to a video”. The actions that can be made are

to add or substitute sound by music files. Instead, a musical library is presented with different musical styles options and with this text from the platform management, “O Youtube encomendou milhares de músicas isentas de royalties para utilizar em vídeos. Pode adicionar estas músicas ao vídeo através da ferramenta abaixo”.



image 51 - youtube.com, support page, March 2020

And then an extensive list appears with different types of music, by genres but also by “emotional states”, for example.



image 52 - youtube.com, support page, March 2020

Rather than recording direct sound or using a sound file to create a soundtrack, the platform leads sound creation work to a “video clip” strategy or background ambience, becoming subaltern and secondary in this audiovisual online production media.

Youtube.com has invested in the musical libraries available, but there are several interrogations here. Is this just a remanent question from early Youtube.com business model, where the connections with mainstream media and major music distribution companies were business targets? Conducting amateur uses of their creativity and “participatory” culture lead production to a less diverse sonic ambience, inducing sound work practices to be shaped through mainstream music consumption. This is already a great point to stress in an analysis of this kind of digital cultural structures. What is the impact of such constraints, with its aesthetic, social and political consequences, as it happens in this type of Youtube uses?

Reflecting on the question of “to act in front of it” or “in agreement with it” in Hirschhorn terms, the development of the artefact editing table became a priority to *restore a polyphony of montage* in the artefact. The platform has, like *a cinema editing table* a sound layer with a possibility to add different layers to the sound work. The audios files can be uploaded directly from the user media storage. In particular, it has another different possibility: the capture of live sound over the video band. This possibility enables a live commentary upon the images. It enables a personal speech, a discourse that commits at the same time with the participant in a level of thought and construction—reflecting from the footage of the events, when the activist participation occurs, where the timeline and film were created.

“Moi un Noir” (1957) by Jean Rouch is an exemplar film about this. An actual description, as the brief introduction of João Moreira Salles in the IDFA site, considers it “*one big game*” where “*Rouch asks his characters to choose a persona for themselves and to act accordingly*.”¹³⁵ The premise of the documentary becomes not the “truth of reality” but the “truth of observation”. Also presented here is this idea of a delayed *voice over*, where exists a distance to constitute a character, a fictional distance that works as a creative one. In the case of this artefact, the platform film, this game of distance and fictional discourse is another relevant hypothesis to a constitution of an activist participation.

The filmmaker, at the same time, proposed a game of fictional characters to the group and a game of truth. The truth of their voices, of their characters' trajectories, and rhythms brought a tone of authenticity to the film. Hence it does not come from a third judgement of filmmaker and ethnographer, or a supposed observational neutral camera. Instead, film *verité* comes from its characters fabulation. Respectful and liberating with all its intended sharpness

¹³⁵ <https://www.idfa.nl/en/film/15481386-98ad-4540-b8c1-4389b37ec477/moi-un-noir> last accessed March 2020

targeting French colonialism. Rouch introduces the film clearly: “*Edward G. Robinson, the hero of the film, I pass him the word*”. The first sequence when Robinson sings, and the camera follows his trajectory to return home, his close-ups and his discourse start to flow, and he unburdens his precarious existence in Treichville. The sound creates another type of “alienation effect”, a certain distance of discourse, the silence of the studio contrasting the streets buzz.

In the case of this platform, this *delayed discourse* hypothesis, if we can conceive it like this, is relevant to address the question of a delayed comprehension of the historical event and the possibility of collective portraits to represent them, where a distance discourse can be articulated after. The pressure of the crowd, their slogans, the emotion of the moment become part of a politics of masses. At the same time liberates in the group a communion, but also might create an unbalanced presence of the individual. A distanced discourse crystallises and recreates the content.

The hypothesis of the platform film embodies this polyphony, the differences of voices, of materials, both in their visual and graphic form, but also in their sonic potential. The polyphony of voices and tones and hesitations on the distanced discourse become part of the heterogeneous portrait.



image 53 - still frames from “Moi, un Noir”, 1957, © Jean Rouch

5.8.5 Overlap, Overwrite, Overdraw

On contemporary video work from the late nineties, the “zeitgeist” *fin de siècle* was Jean Luc Godard’s project “Histoire(s) du Cinéma”(1989). The cinematic temporality and magnificen-

ce revolved by the low resolution, the “grain image” of last XXth century video. Those days, coincident with the end of a century, were a moment of balance in the battle for images, between systems and apparatus. Which media would emerge as persistence? This was also a class struggle, 35mm film or tape, cinema theatrical release versus amateur camcorders and home VHS player.

None of such images matter, implicated in such conflict, appeared as hegemonic, instead focused on circulation. Take, for example, Raymond Bellour and “La Querelle des Dispositifs” (2015). Instead, despite nomadism of images at the dawn of the century, an emerging digital visual continent appeared and was bright, binary and radicalising the concept of the image, “synthetical”, as inquired by Harun Farocki? What defines the synthetic image, that no longer relies upon that photochemical appealing emulsion trace of the light of optical cinema? Or either those grained, foggy “poor image” of an electronic video? Digital image installs a regime of substitution, converging elements into information bits. And a seeming endless duration.

One of the last gestures in his “own century”, of a thinker and image creator as Jean Luc Godard, was to collect, gather, overlap, overwrite, quote, cut and reframe *pages* of a century of cinema. The video in its “narcissistic” tendency in Rosalind Krauss terms¹³⁶, would be a vehicle to such inter-medial task, a gesture of History and cinema again.

The fifth volume of “*L’Oeil de L’Histoire - Passés Cités par JLG*” (2015) by Georges Didi-Huberman is about it. Part of Jean Luc Godard method to create images, texts and sounds resonate ghosts of multiple other images, texts and sounds from the History of cinema, from the deads of cinema. This “godardian procedure” is considered in this research as *prototyping*. This method of a grid of fragmented ghosts expands into multimedia files and hyperlink objects in networked space. As presented by Didi-Huberman, in a dialogue between Godard and Youssef Ishaghpour, “Archéologie du Cinéma et Mémoire du Siècle.”¹³⁷(2000) that evidences the importance and tenderness through the heterogeneity of his working materials, “Là où il y a un espace, là où il y a un vrai travail, c’est entre le texte et l’image. J’ai rendu un hommage à l’image et au son, mes devoirs ou si on peut dire mon respect filial, par rapport à ces images et sons qui viennent d’avant moi.” But the same ho-

¹³⁶ Rosalind Krauss, “Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism”, *October*, Vol. 1 (Spring, 1976), pp. 50-64. A text on the last decades of XX century and video emancipation, but if read on the digital image, it gains new meanings.

¹³⁷ Ishaghpour, Youssef, and Jean-Luc Godard. “Archéologie du cinéma et mémoire du siècle.” *Dialogue* (2000).

image to literature, “Mais j’ai rendu aussi le même hommage, le même respect et le même devoir au livre et à la littérature, et à la critique telle que je l’entends, en même temps”. (Didi-Huberman, 2015, p. 14).

In the platform also, materials are not dispersed; they dialogue in the middle of a frame in the editing table. For that, several tools were developed: superposition of images, the possibility to write and to draw on the images. Superposition of images is a significant effect, a cinematic effect disused, not easy to find as a central editing tool, in amateur editing online software available, but also, in referred Youtube.com Creator Studio tools. The palimpsest of images, creating an effect of sedimentation and a temporal aesthetics were part of Godard’s work on the end of 20th-century, developing an alter political significance to visual accumulation, rather than an interpretation of abundance.

Also quotation, part of reframing the text and the plan, reenacts a dialectical composition of the montage. A composition of montage gives Jean Luc Godard the freedom of *layered edition*, dealing with fragments, reframing texts. The effects that a quotation, repositioned in a screen, creates are part of a dialectical tension between the corpus of the text. Presence as an absence, but also as an immobilisation of a phrase, a new linear potential.

As Didi-Huberman writes, it expands the richness of inter materiality. For Godard, quotation in his system of framing sentences, gets close to Roman Jakobson concept of phoneme into language - “une unité minimale douée de cette mobilité essentielle à toute énonciation et de cette possibilité combinatoire essentielle à toute signification” (Didi-Huberman, 2015, p.19). From this idea of Jakobson, recombined by Godard, an important effect in the work of this filmmaker happens, “Pour Godard (...) la phrase ne vaut que cadrée, c’est-à-dire réduite d’un côté (...) mais augmentable d’un autre côté.”(Didi-Huberman, 2015, p.19).

This *expanding property* of the phrase framing in film, characteristic of Godard’s essay exposing, has empowering possibilities and consequences, if reenacted and expanded as an editing tool, once again deviated to this activist digital platform film. This “*phrase framing*” of Godard can be used as an experiment to augment protests discourses and expose the extension of its textuality, historicity but also its political potential, like a slogan from a protest. Like an added value of remnant cardboards of a demonstration, with their singularities, the inks, the shapes, loose phrases, more or less common slogans or completely original sentences. Remembering Thomas Hirschhorn precarious materials and Youtube.com videos

analysed, people focused their attention on the slogans of the protests. A line of work from these footage materials, like images, can be reconstituted in the editing table. These two possibilities can be experimented in this artefact, once the access to this tool is part of the main bifurcation within the editing table page.

Didi-Huberman writes about Godard extensive essayistic cinematic language in his work, but also about his editing practice of these concepts, that are here exposed as part of a collective of possibilities in the digital artifact proposed: “le “gestus citable”, inhérent à chaque” tableau” brechtien serait obtenu par des “interruptions de l’action” - une série d’écoups”, de “chocs”, de “ruptures du déroulement”, dit aussi Benjamin” (Didi-Huberman, 2015, p.34) These “frame procedures” are vital to a corpus of senses and significances, constituting what Didi-Huberman calls authentic “dialectical images” - “Citations, cadrages, interruptions, tout cela concourt à produire ce que Benjamin nomme un “arrangement expérimental” où la fameuse “distanciation” brechtienne trouve sa forme même”. One of its forms, or “C’est ainsi que les formes prennent position - *Formes que pensent*”. (Didi-Huberman, 2015, p.35)

The same program of Harun Farocki or Thomas Hirschhorn. “Formes qui suscitent, dans leur poétique même, une pensée de l’histoire et une pratique du politique”. Didi-Huberman approaches this concept to a figure of the artist in the text “The author as producer”(Benjamin, 1934). For Didi-Huberman, Benjamin formulates “la tendance d’une oeuvre politique ne peut fonctionner politiquement que si elle fonctionne littérairement aussi”. This affirmation is close to Godard formulation “Quoi faire?” (1970).

This formulation took here to expand its possibilities, in the context and horizon of Digital Media, within this research and artefact modes of use. It assumed the implications of this transversal movement. It was underlining and creating a hyperlink between the second, the 18th and the 20th postulates.

“1. Il faut faire des films politiques.

2. *Il faut faire politiquement des films.*

3. 1 and 2 sont antagonistes et appartiennent à deux conceptions du monde opposées. [...]

17. Faire 1, c’est comprendre les lois du monde objectif pour expliquer le monde.

18. *Faire 2, c’est comprendre les lois du monde objectif pour transformer activement le monde.*

19. Faire 1, c'est décrire la misère du monde.

20. Faire 2, c'est montrer le peuple en lutte”.

(Jean Luc Godard in Didi-Huberman, 2015. p 35)

To this study what is implicit is, as Didi-Huberman writes, *technique*, *techné*, both in Benjamin, Brecht or in Godard. For Benjamin “Le concept de technique représente le point d'accroche dialectique à partir duquel peut être surmontée l'opposition stérile de la forme et du contenu”(Didi-Huberman, 2015, p.35). For Didi-Huberman, Godard revealed through his long journey of work, an aesthetic and political capacity of “transformer les conditions de production de ses objets”, enabling different senses and trajects within them. For Didi-Huberman, Godard acts as an “extension” of a dynamic dialogue that should be put into question under the benjaminian reflection on the “*polytechnique de l'auteur comme producteur*” - involving painting, photography, poetry and journalism. The several concomitant strategies that collide in Godard's films, like the ones referred, are, for Didi-Huberman, one of the main traces of this filmmaker, his originality of “le rapport de tressage intime entre images et langages.” (Didi-Huberman, 2015, p.36).



image 54 - “Godard: Histoire(s) du cinéma 3b Une vague nouvelle”, (2012) © Pilar Narvaez, “Godard: Poster Tributes to Histoire(s) du Cinéma”, in Pantone Canvas Gallery



image 55 - still frame “Godard: Histoire(s) du cinéma 4a Le contrôle de l'univers collage”, (2012), © Pilar Narvaez, “Godard: Poster Tributes to Histoire(s) du Cinéma” in Pantone Canvas Gallery¹³⁸

5.8.6 The *machine* of Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi

The work of Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi has several entry doors as a model to the developed artefact in this research. The first parallel is established within concepts of a machine, in their conception their “caméra analytique”, and secondly, continuing with the features of the platform, the use of chromatic filters to experiment emotional and political layers in the timelines edition.

These artists wrote, “*Notre caméra analytique*” (*Trafic n° 13, hiver 1995*), where Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi signed a decisive theory of their work. As their retrospective at Centre Georges Pompidou¹³⁹ focus, on the development of an artefact, a “dispositif”. The relevance of developing of a machine, an apparatus that works within certain material conditions, aesthetic and political ones, at the same time, concatenating some of the fundamental axis of poetical construction: cinema, memory and politics or a weaving machine where functioning structures are archival footage, different temporalities and sonorities and a visual re-appropriation, through chromatic deviations. Found footage, slow motion, dis-

¹³⁸ [http://canvas.pantone.com/gallery/4617353/Godard-Poster-tributes-to-Histoire\(s\)-du-cinema](http://canvas.pantone.com/gallery/4617353/Godard-Poster-tributes-to-Histoire(s)-du-cinema)

¹³⁹ https://www.centrepompidou.fr/cpv/agenda/event.action?param.id=FR_R-e0e532529fbc02679c940f0c24f59f0¶m.idSource=FR_E-e0e532529fbc02679c940f0c24f59f0 - last accessed March 2020

ruptive soundtrack and chromatic experiences are part of a *modus operandi* of these two cineasts in a profound work on a cinematic reconstruction of archival images universe.

One relevant aspect of their practice to transport to this research is a necessity of development of a *specific device* itself. Such political cinematographic artefact has to project clearly what are the pieces, or elements of this machine, those created from scratch, those juxtaposed from existent parts, and what does the concatenation of the whole function, or said differently, how does aesthetic and political assemblage work.

The politics of the machine of Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi in their “caméra analytique” is an essential part of their practice, their work and their discourse. The object to be transformed by the machine is in itself immaterial, the *photogram*, and as Gianikian refers, “The photogram is the object from all the editing work starts. It is about photographing the image again. It is like looking to a photograph slowly and making it immovable, isolating some details in its interior, getting closer.” (from the Catalogue of Texts by “Doc’s Kingdom” Documentary Encounters, 2010, my translation).

As Miriam de Rosa writes: “The delicate gaze of the artists emphasises this itinerary precisely, while the distance among the screens mirrors the temporal distance among the historical moments depicted by the installation. Such a distance is **chromatically** underscored by the intense tones characterising the images on the three screens. The peculiar attention towards colours is just one of the elements on which the attention of the couple is centred. The particular procedure they use in order to rework the archival images manipulates them in a sort of scientific way.”¹⁴⁰.

As De Rosa continues, their “*analytical camera*” is a - “special device built by the artists themselves” enabling their intervention, “the duration of the images is extended, as the frames are re-filmed in order to explore them in detail, notice their peculiarities, perceive their consistency, and detect their substance and thicken their grain. As in a quest for the tangibility of a visual trace, the eye embraces the image and crystallises it, discovering the intangible and the invisible”. In the words of Angela Ricci Lucchi, the definition of their “caméra analytique” - “Our ‘analytical camera’ permits us to work on the physicality of the image. (...) The mark of men catches our attention, but also that of time does. (...) Moreover, the concept of materiality couples with the impression of having to do with ‘lived’ images. They suggest the

¹⁴⁰ De Rosa, Miriam “Non, Non, Non, visiting the exhibition with Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi” in NECSUS Autumn 2012, “Tangibility”.

idea of consumption of the visual element triggered by those gazes which saw them – mostly private gazes, since the spectator was quite often the one projecting these very images, even touching the film and leaving his fingerprints on it.”¹⁴¹ (De Rosa, 2012)

One aspect of the re-appropriation of these artists is a manual retouching of their footage within the editing process. One of these layers is direct painting on recreated sequences upon the original stills. The visual effect of this procedure is also part of an expanded filmic intervention of these filmmakers on the materials they recompose. “The device created by Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi becomes a tool able to elaborate the cinematic image in its grain, texture, and materiality”, once as Gianikian defined “*we are like copyists, replicating cinema to avoid its dissolution*”(De Rosa, 2012).

The colourist work on their compositions is a crucial level of this resistant replication, as De Rosa notes - “Such action is expressed by a further reworking, namely the recolouring phase that consists of a superimposition of a coloured layer on the image, aiming to add a particular meaning, impression, and effect to the representation. It is a profoundly symbolic operation, which contributes to a renewal of the archival image”. The author points the choice of “shocking and eye-catching colours” from the artists that contrast with the length, the rhythm or the action of recovered and reconstructed scenes. As the author continues “The colouring process demonstrates a relevant value in figural terms: the authors’ work in preserving and manipulating the image echoes the opacity of what it brings back to life. The chromatic tones reflect and express the perception of the subjects appearing on the screen at the very moment they were filmed”.(De Rosa, 2012)

The example given by Gianikian and Ricci Lucchi, expresses clearly this redirection of chromatic use - “[a]s in *Su tutte le vette è pace*, the structure of the film follows the visions by Austrian soldier Felix Hecht, who used to note them in his diary. He was a young pacifist stuck into the violence of the war (...). During this period, his perception abilities were deformed, since the colours he saw derived from his hopeless impressions and his expositions to the extreme life conditions on the glacier. In his diary, he describes the sky as yellow and the snow as red.” (De Rosa, 2012). A choice of chromatic manual intervention on film unveils another layer of inter poetical construction.

¹⁴¹ On the development of a digital artefact, how to create or reenact the questionings of such a material machine? How to bring to digital terms the artisanal apparatus of such artistic machine?

As De Rosa concludes: “The choice of colouring the natural elements after Hecht’s memories reinterpret the reality of the image(...). The nebulosity and the fictional colours render a violent tension, which turns into a strong visualisation and a provoking exhibition of the image”. And again from Gianikian/Ricci Lucchi interview, this use of colour is “aesthetic, evoking an emotional sense of what is on screen. This makes the same use of colour ethic[al]”. As Gianikian underlines, “[e]very single frame as an entity in itself has its own specific time”, concluding - “*We re-signify the images*”.

The importance of chromatic experimentation in the platform is an attempt to deviate from a visual universe, as the “mass image”. Digital images do not match block colour language of primitive cinema. The exercise here is to propose a deviated flow of digital images charging them with a colouring palette, of primitive tinted significances for red, yellow, blue, green? The insertion of a disruptive chromatic colour code in the artefact works on the operability of the machine as a relevant re-coder, on the level of coding emotions, and making them “re-signify” the images, also through an outdated chromatic catalogue, subverting the logic of image filters, so abundant today in every mobile digital device.

This is also a simple homage to these unique artists.

This function of the machine enables to express and recreate, in an exact way, the politics and aesthetics of emotional life in digital images. In this sense, the editing table of the platform only allows adding as image filters solid colours, from a simple palette. Colour, chromatic effects with different levels of density, another elusive concept working in the fringes of opacity and transparency, creating and recreating visibility and invisibility regimes are two axes of effective intervention on the frames of the footage and photographs available on the platform. Also an experimental intervention on the affection of the images, from a deviation of contemporary “*digitalness*” to atemporal emotional palettes. This can also reactivate a chromatic memory of moving image and create a renewed mosaic that constitutes an alternative to formatted image filters available in “mass image” regime that tend to a homogenous flatness.

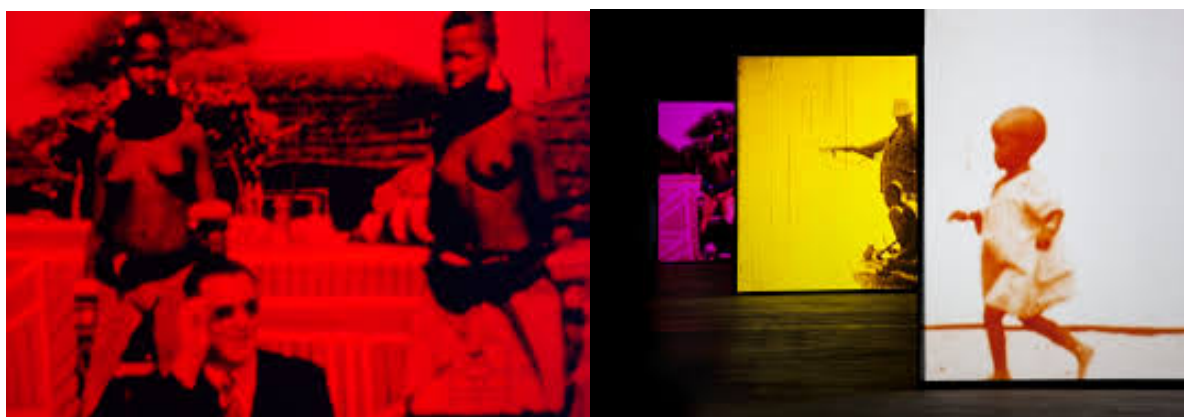


image 56 - still frames from “La Marche de L’Homme” (2001) and “*NON NON NON*”(2012), installation view, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, ©Angela Ricci Lucchi and Yervant Gianikian,

This compared overview of the artefact is a journey of references that anchored its development, with a focus on influences brought to “experimental” digital ground in the artefact development, in a Practice-Based Research process.

5.9 From Critical Laboratory to Artist Machine

From initial hypothesis of affronting contemporaneity and following modes of production of contemporary artist Thomas Hirschhorn, a digital “Critical Laboratory” was essayed. The development of this artefact was partly a journey of composing parts, interacting their theoretical and aesthetic potential, with constraints of addressing fundamental research questions and affronting contemporaneity. Such approach was developed only from a perspective of materials, its precarious conditions and its political consequences, as debated around notions of vernacular and “poor image” emancipatory energies, but more substantially, on attainment to techniques that address “digital”.

Thomas Hirschhorn “utopian” and “realistic” space installations' models were essayed here to adapt to its digital technological specificities, to developing a prototype that would respond to digital culture conditions, from this experimental approach. What and how to do, to shape materialities of digital protest videos that were produced and wander in online video platforms, as the one studied, Youtube.com. Interaction, digital participatory culture, “poor image” provenance and emancipation was respected. The platform projects an assembly of bodies, events, stories. Within its modes of use, enables an expansion to participatory culture

and a lasting gesture, as collective as an individual, of aesthetic and intervention, Art and Activism - Artivism.

The platform proposes to retain Gerald Raunig reflection on “machines”, Deleuze and Guattari iteration, when machine assumes concatenation, when components, in its diversity “tools, other people, statements, signs and desires, but they only become a machine in the process of exchange, not in the paradigm of substitution” (“A Thousand Machines” Raunig, 2007, p.32). In a further analysis, Gerald Raunig recognises an initial moment for the activist machine here proposed. “May Day Machines”, concatenated upon European May Day Movements, with their focus on precarious labour forms among social corpus, and their disruptive May Day celebrations, questioned and gave form to the appearance of emergent social machines, as Antonio Negri in “GoodBye Mr Socialism”, in Raunig, affirms “Mayday is an autonomous process today, a network in which many individuals and different subjectivities throughout Europe act.”. Precarious multitudes, like those analysed in these research from 2011 videos, “developed into a common designation for a multi-layered and multifaceted mass” that would self identify as “social movements”(Raunig, 2007, p.85). The forms of resistance and its exposure were yet to come. Precedent May Day Parades and its occupation of the streets were a kind of vanguard of 2011 movements, also on its forms of protest “cultural jamming and contemporary political propaganda reigned as a generalisation of the street art of sprayers and taggers: abstract machine concatenating invention and performativity, war machine and theatre machine, the assemblage of signs and the assemblage of bodies”(Raunig, 2007, p.87).

These lines were written before 2011, but they lead to envision an Artivist Machine this platform attempts. Through concatenation of social movements with remnant digital images of the events, where an heterotopian patchwork takes place. The thread here proposed and detailed deviates to “other places” a device, a grid, a template, where montage assumes a shape and gives forms, on a political level, organises new appearances as MayDay parades and 2011 “Networks of Hope” or “Movements of the Squares”. Consequently, as Hito Steyerl proposes in “Articulation of Protest” (2002) “the thinking about art and politics together is usually treated in the field of political theory, and art often appears as its ornament. What happens, though, if we conversely relate a reflection about a form of artistic production, namely the theory of montage, to the field of politics?”.

An Artist Machine proposes a prototype that concatenates social movements with their images, their possible collective memory and perhaps collective political images, against the dissolution of portraits of multitudes. This prototype becomes a template, with its difficulties of implementation, the success of working features and use bugs, but the hypothesis was projected, designed, thought, developed. The “cardboard template” of Thomas Hirschhorn, “utopian and realistic” at the same time, is here.

5.10 Script for a Platform Film as User Experience

Next sections compile different periods of the development of the artefact, and the first is a detailed journey to a user experience of the artefact as it works currently, with correspondent identification of the pages of the platform and its features, their functions and uses, like a script to a navigation of these practical hypotheses. After being presented several moments of interface development, layout sketches in different phases, but also some inputs on the item of collaboration, since this was a collaborative project, and some reflection also on the question of maintenance of digital artefacts and immaterial computing objects.

The first page of the platform is the home page, a presentation as an introduction. Only appears a central screen on a black canvas, with a video loop of all the timelines created in the device. A button to click appears - ENTRAR | ENTER - to continue.



images 57 - still frames from introduction layout, homepage, title and introductory text in <https://filhosdamadrugada.ncg.ingrid.pt/plataforma/public/index.php>

The next screen links with a central button to the title of the platform - “*Filhos da Madrugada*” - It can be heard a piece of music playing. The music is the original song, “Canto Moço”(1970) by José Afonso¹⁴², a singer and songwriter, eminent figure of Portuguese protest song. When clicked the title, it links to the “manifesto”, a presentation text. The text is an invitation to participate in the platform in two modes, to share personal footage and make a timeline or make a self-portrait. Alternatively, nothing of this, whatever one pleases.

This moment in the platform User Experience corresponds to a kind of Brecht’s “Alienation Effect” as discussed before, on the spectator interaction with the platform, as if a distance is required from the spectator, to become a conscious actor or activist. The User Experience path has now a bifurcation. The user or participant has now a choice to make, to VIEW | VER, to assist, or to PARTICIPATE| PARTICIPAR and act, react through the proposed journey. The first choice is the VIEW path - to see, to watch.

I - VIEW | VER



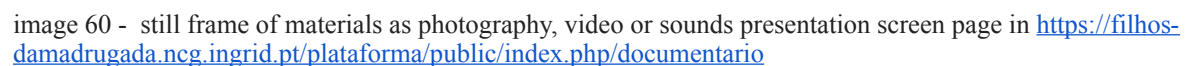
image 58 - still frame of view menu screen from “Filhos da Madrugada”, <https://filhosdamadrugada.ncg.in-grid.pt/plataforma/public/index.php/documentario>

COLLECTIVE WALL | MOSAICO

The first set of pages, COLLECTIVE WALL is a mosaic tab - a reference to a patchwork interface, or *boro visuality*, where all participatory inputs appear, from bottom to top, by order of insertion, the oldest in the bottom of the page. Each one of the visual fragments

¹⁴² <http://www.aja.pt/biografia/> last accessed March 2020

image 59 - still frame of “collective wall” page in <https://filhosdamadrugada.ncg.ingrid.pt/plataforma/public/index.php/documentario>



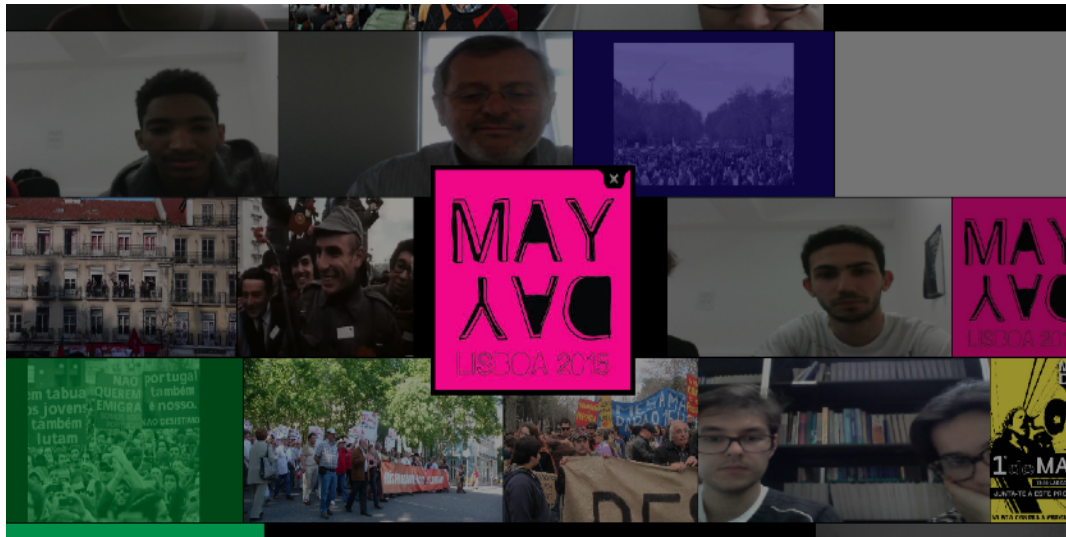


image 61 - still frame of materials as photography, video or sounds presentation screen page in <https://filhos-damadrugada.ncg.ingrid.pt/plataforma/public/index.php/documentario>

COLLECTIVE LOOP

The collective loop page is an interpretation of a continuous film, changing a mosaic tab of a spatial distribution of film timelines in screens, as seen in collective wall, to a collective loop, or a collective film, made of all the films and self-portraits, but into one sequence only, with no order of appearance established previously. This page works within a shuffle mode logic, where films of the platform appear and succeed each other. This page and the loop one, focus on an idea of untimeliness temporality, where a continuum of the edited film of protest footage and self-portraits juxtapose.

FILMS

The next tab is a visualisation screen of the films already made by the participants. The scroll down follows the order of the recording date of the film. On the left side of the screen, there is the function of creating a film - CRIAR. This button opens a new tab, with the possibility to make a film, when choosing the participatory mode of approaching the platform. The video symbol is at the centre of each smaller frame indicating the final video timeline, and it also includes the title of it at the centre top. A new page opens with a viewer at the centre of the screen, where the selected film runs.

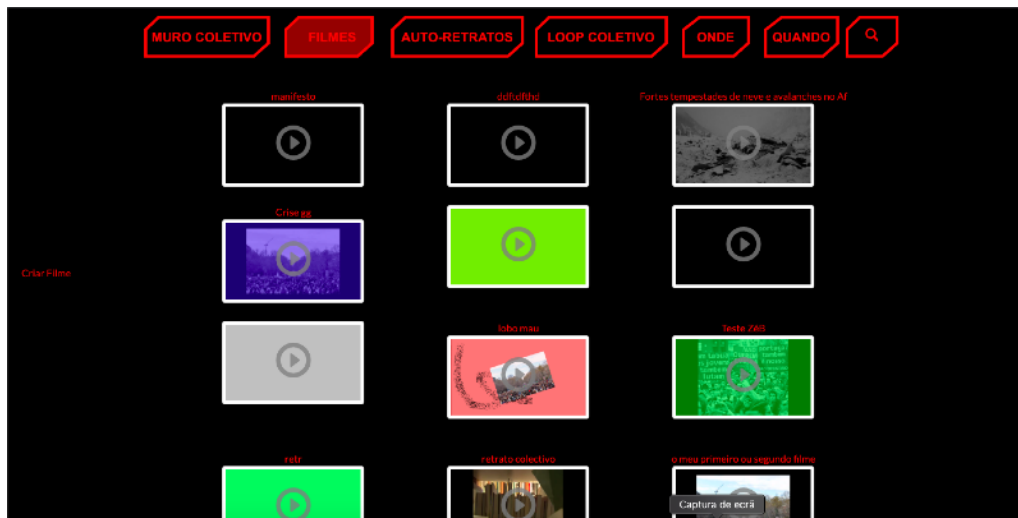


image 62 - still frame of “film mode” presentation screen page in <https://filhosdamadrugada.ncg.ingrid.pt/plataforma/public/index.php/documentario>

The main menu remains at the top of the page, and it can be seen the name of the author on the top left. It can also be possible to select to create film and then proceed to the PARTICIPATION mode.

SELF PORTRAITS

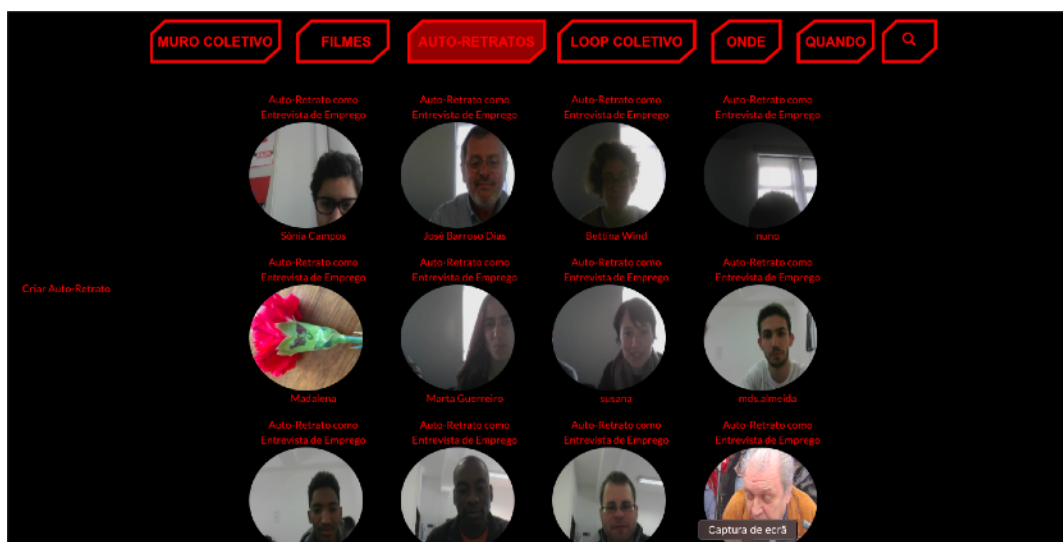


image 63 - still frame of self portrait presentation screen page in <https://filhosdamadrugada.ncg.ingrid.pt/plataforma/public/index.php/documentario>

WHEN | WHERE | SEARCH



Time-space coordinates. Participants can answer when they made their films to the question of “Where did this event take place?” and “When did this event take place?”.

These questions reflect into a map with a point per location of the events. A timeline of the decades scrolls and shows some pinpointed years, with a caption with the title of the films. No further data is used, as, the analytics or the georeference data of the footages. These coordinates are part of an agglutination, once the concentration of films on a temporal moment creates a visual knot of accumulation of events, as a collective mass of protest, footage and films. A SEARCH area is available on the platform.

II - PARTICIPATE | PARTICIPAR |

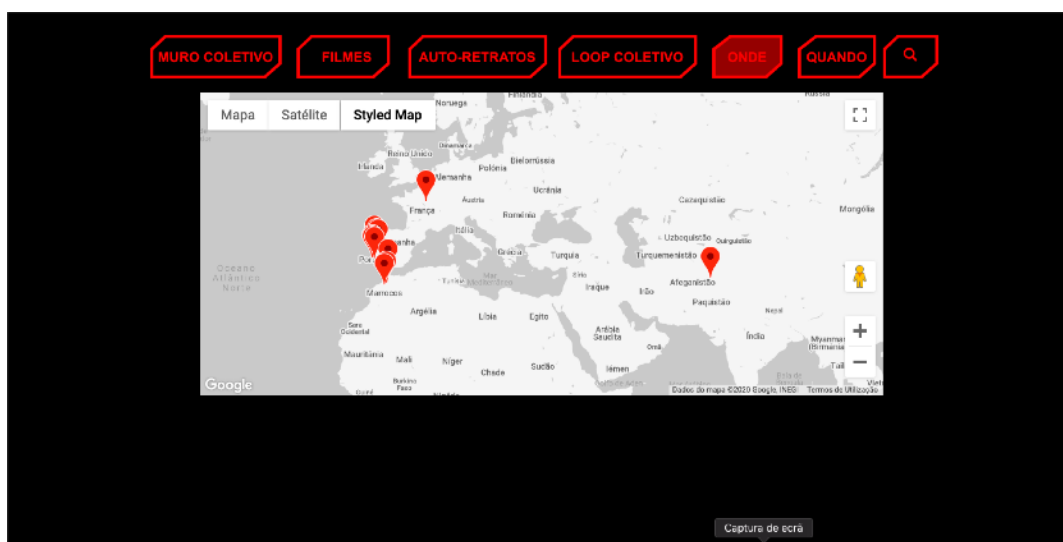


image 66 - still frame of the page PARTICIPATE| PARTICIPAR tab presentation screen page in <https://filhos-damadrugada.ncg.ingrid.pt/plataforma/public/index.php/documentario>

In the participatory mode, the first is a login page, once registration is needed to connect the saved versions of each user interaction to access in different moments. The page has a small text that explains the need to have a login. The login is made with an email and a password. The page can save user credentials.

Once registered, users can access their participating journey, creating through the two participatory modes: recording the self-portraits interview performance page or editing their timelines and films. On the first path, the recording of the self-portrait as an interview, after making

login in and selecting the creation of a self-portrait page, a new page to start will appear. In this page, one can create a self-portrait or watch the others that have been made. Each answer will appear in another mosaic of small frames of the video answers, organised sequentially.

SELF PORTRAIT

On the top of the page appears the menu to record a self-portrait. Each question presents within a white frame, and after authorisation, is given access to the platform to the built-in camera. The interview begins, and the user records each of the answers according to the interview script. In the end, each user can add a new question to the collective bourse of questions. These questions can be accessed at the end of each new self-portrait participation, and one can be chosen and answered by each new user.

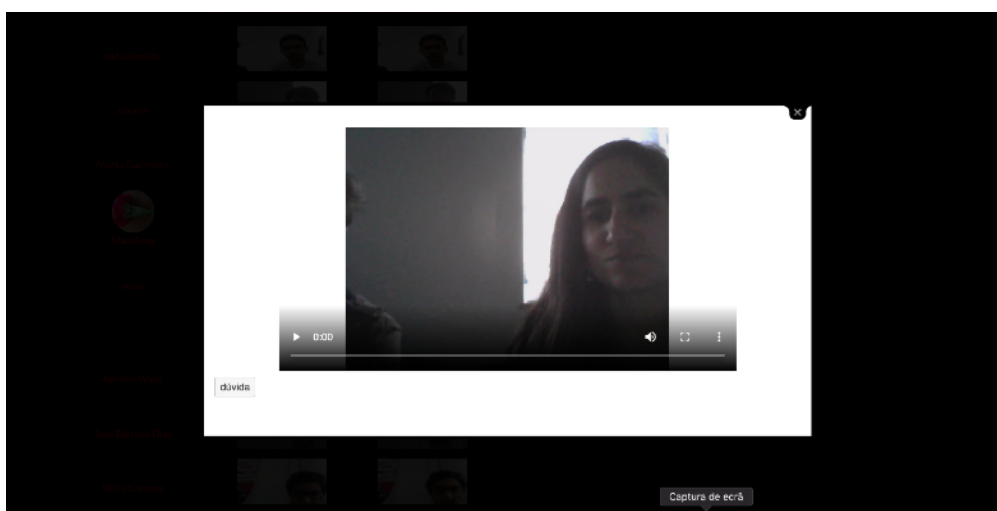


image 67 - still frame of the page SELF PORTRAIT tab, collective view of Self Portraits screen page in <https://filhosdamadrugada.ncg.ingrid.pt/plataforma/public/index.php/documentario>

The user's interview will participate in the collective wall of interviews. There are two tabs on this page: the set of self-portraits, and the set of all the questions added. Furthermore is available a selection tab to choose a new question to answer and see other answers to the integrated question.

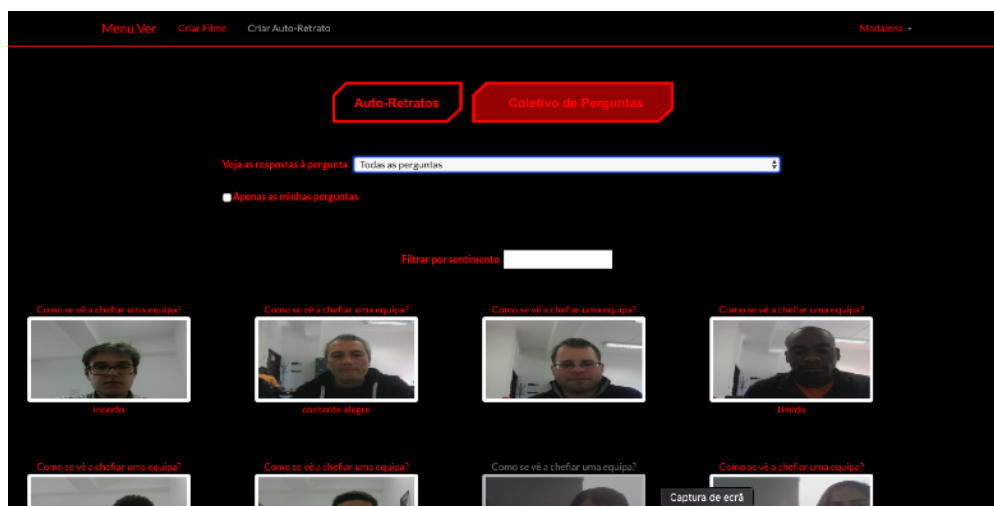


image 68 - still frame of the Self Portrait tab, detail of the viewer of Self Portraits of other participants in <https://filhosdamadrugada.ncg.ingrid.pt/plataforma/public/index.php/documentario>



image 69 - still frame of Self Portrait tab, view of collective of questions screen in <https://filhosdamadrugada.ncg.ingrid.pt/plataforma/public/index.php/documentario>



image 70- frame of Self Portrait tab - view of selection of other questions by participants screen in <https://filhosdamadrugada.ncg.ingrid.pt/plataforma/public/index.php/documentario>

CREATE A FILM

This is one of the central functions of the platform—the editing table. The first page of this function is a personal page with the login name at the top right. The page is a dashboard of the editor. The user can edit several films, and on the dashboard appears the set of all the films at the present moment, its name, a thumbnail image and an editing link. To each timeline exists the possibility to go back in the edition to previous edited films, but they also exist the possibility to create a new film. If selected a new page opens in the editor. On the left top appears the possibility to upload files to the collective archive, enlarging the available footage. Then at the bottom appears the timeline. The second movement is to access the collective archive to import files to the user timeline and start the montage, using the timeline tailored features, and editing basic features.

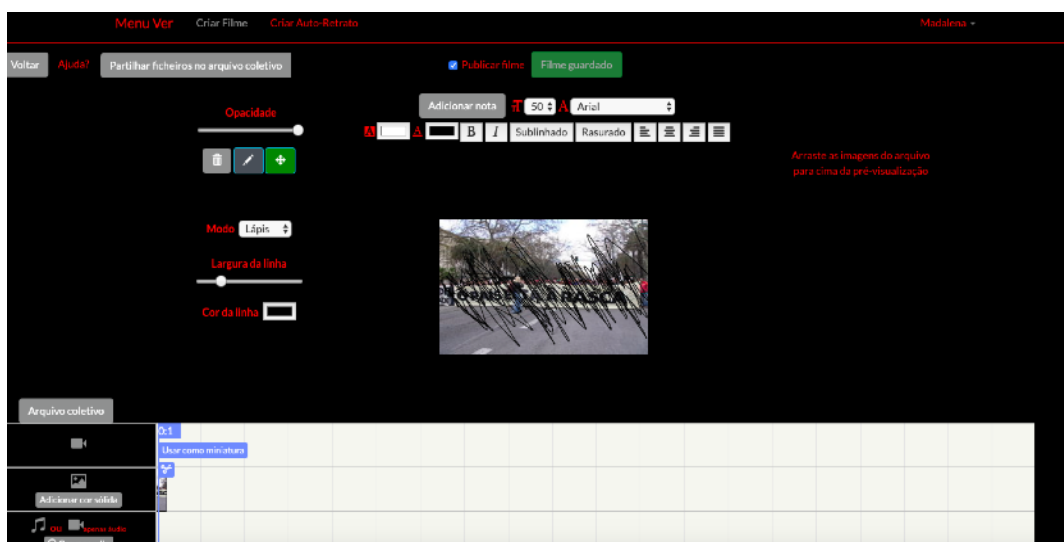


image 72 - still frame of editing table layout screen page in <https://filhosdamadrugada.ncg.ingrid.pt/plataforma/public/index.php/documentario>

The **timeline** has different layers: a **video file layer**, an **image file layer**, a **text layer** and a **drawing layer** with a **solid colour filter layer**, that opens a colour palette. And a **pallet of brushes and pencils**. Only solid colour filters are possible to add. No other possibilities of image filters are possible, as in image apps editing functionalities present in standard mobile phones. No solarise, no old movie, no sepia, or others. Just solid colours, and a game of opacities to empower the relations between colour and emotions, and reenact a collective visual memory as the examples of the corpus of films presented earlier. The next is an **audio files**

layer that is divided into two functionalities, to **import audio files** and a **built-in audio recorder**, enabling a live recording of audio during the editing, and a consequent potential discourse.

The last is the **graphic layer**, where a **layer of writing and drawing** can be used to add to the composition of other visual elements. The **graphic layer** opens **two secondary menus**, one on the left and another on the top of the preview frame. On the **drawing menu**, it can be chosen the tool to **draw, pencil, brush** or **spray**. These tools are directly connected with the graphic images of posters and protest billboards. The **width** of the tool is editable as also the colour. Then after, the **opacity** of the tool can be chosen too, as also it is possible to place the drawing in the frame or erase it. On the top menu of **text selection**, appears a selection of **writing tool**, with the text layer available, the **font letter** selection, the **size of the font**, the possibility to select the **background colour**, the **font colour**, the **text alignment** and also **text highlights: bold, italic** and **underlined**. The drawing and writing functions can be used as a layer on top of still image files, as writing and drawing are also available over video files.

The last option on the right bottom of the screen is the possibility to **download the film** the user ended and recorded. Saving the timeline it will be available on the platform **Collective Wall** and accessible in the **Collective Loop** mode. However, it can also be downloaded by the user or uploaded to another platform or embedded in other Web possibilities, facilitating the dissemination potential. Although apparently common editing options a fact is that as analysed these tools previously are not available in a vastly used online free video editing software, the Youtube.com Creator Studio. The editing possibilities narrowed at the present moment, only enabling almost resizing the clips, and adding some add bands to it, being the software interface significantly diminished in its shallow possibilities.

This in-depth description of the user experience of this platform reinforces the explanation of the modes of use of an activist editing table. The share of footage, using others and facilitating one's own is the first methodological step for a common, shared visuality. The sound recording, as have been discussed before embodies the voice as a powerful tool of individuality, as enabling the platform to be a polyphonic patchwork. The tool to recording a speech, a sound element, a soundtrack over a visual band is a tool of distancing, contributing to the possibility of rewriting, and remixing that enables the sedimentation of meanings. An

act of resistance presents in front of the immediacy and immersiveness ideology of video on-line platforms' interfaces and software.

The graphic and drawing tools bring to this platform the ludic and spontaneous as much as improvised, hand made aesthetics of the protests, recreating one of the greatest patrimonies of such events, its remnants materials. Posters, billboards, original slogans, graphic compositions, photographs, collages, images that act together, “in-between” gathered concerning the others present at the event, but also through the atemporal temporality of the protest event. These images and this activist mode of production expands here in each user mode of creating its film, and the overall platform mosaic.

6. DESIGN, STRUCTURE and COLLABORATIONS

There were several different phases of **Interface Design** and its features. Some of those layouts were developed during some of the curricular seminars, for example, Media Technology or Media Laboratory. The layouts, drafted by the author, presented here, can evidence a consistency of the projected core architecture, interaction and interface design, even if the graphic design has evolved through the research process.

. First drafts from platform design, developed in curricular seminars as Media Technology.



image 72 - a composite of the first phase of page layout sketches.

. The second phase of the graphic design of the layout of the pages.

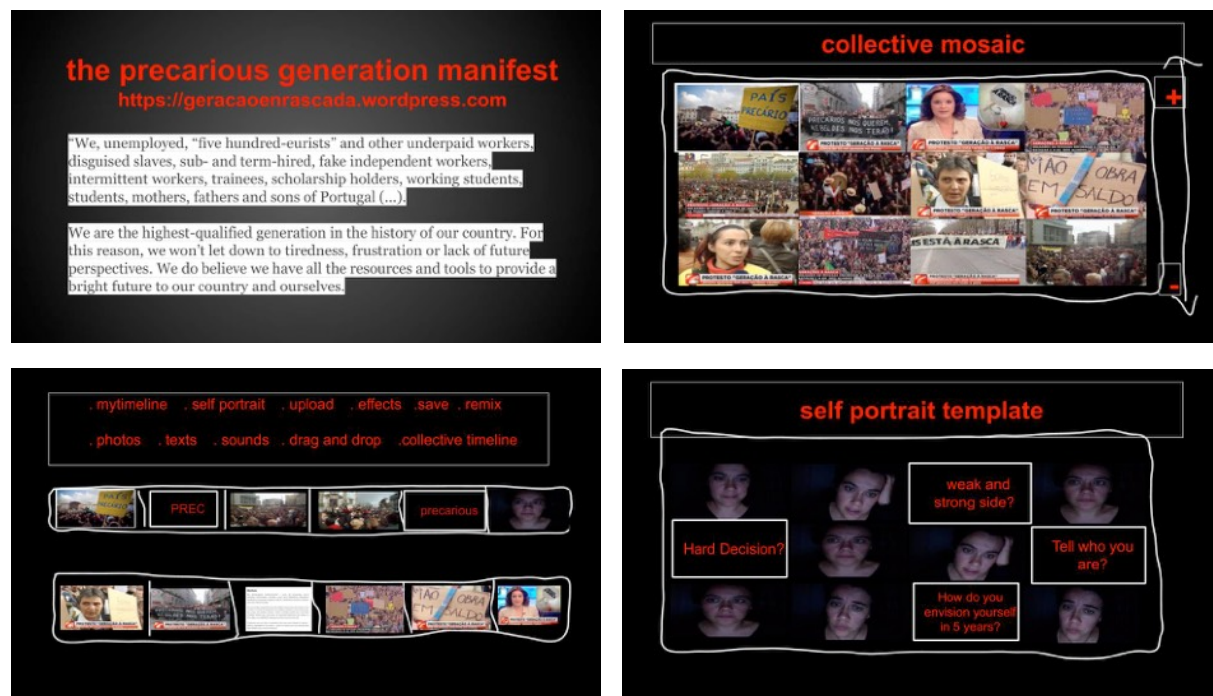
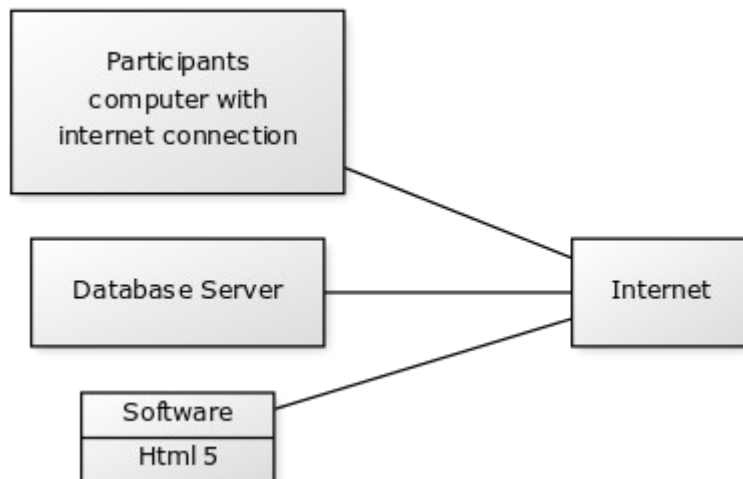


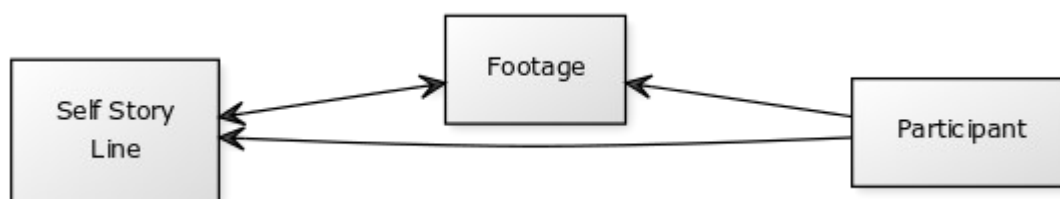
image 73 - second phase of the layout pages of interface design

. Structure and Schemes

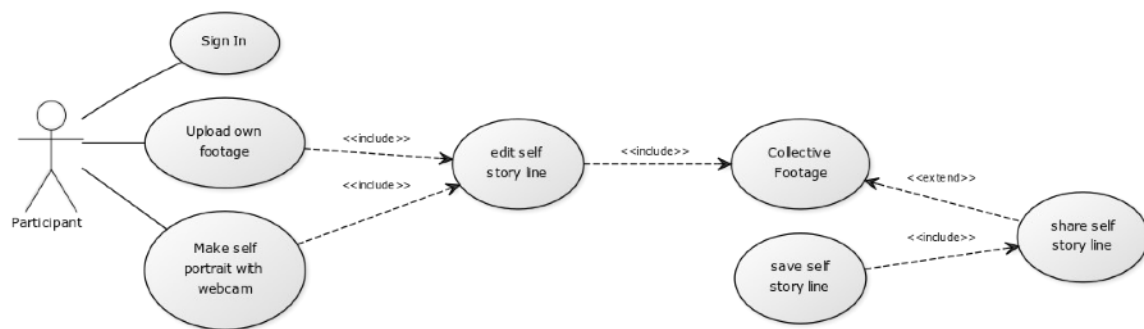
- diagram 1 - System Architecture



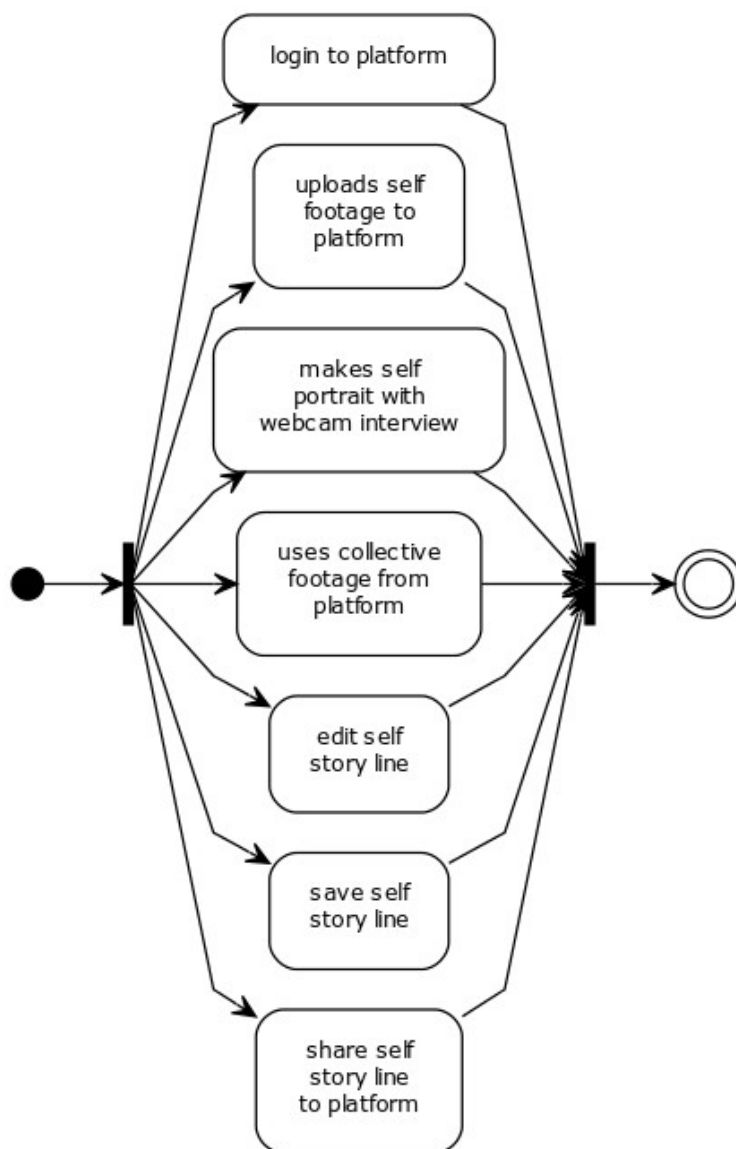
- Class Diagram II



-Use Case Diagram



- Activity Diagram- Participant



. Technological development of the platform was part of a **set of collaborations** with Daniel Cruz, a Master Computer Engineering (FCT-UNL) researcher, who developed the core programming structure of the platform, it became the subject of his Master thesis investigation - “Plataforma Colaborativa para Documentário Interativo” - Daniel dos Santos da Cruz – FCT-UNL). This project also has a partnership with INCD¹⁴³, which provides computing and hosting services for the platform, due to its protocol to support Portuguese research with a technological component. This platform was developed with instructions as a canvas to publish, edit and re-use video, sound, images and graphic elements, predominantly text. An interaction interface implemented with a video editor, to the platform, defined in different steps, was part of the collaboration process with Daniel Cruz, integrated into his Master thesis, who programmed the specific features presented.

Interdisciplinary work is seen as something positive or productive. Nevertheless, when working with development techniques that are not mastered, structure and process of the building are built by on a dependent relationship with other parts involved in its construction. In an architectural analogy, it corresponds to a sketch rather than a built building. However, in the end, the sketch, even if utopian, was necessary, once it draws a vision of a possible future. This aligns this research between the sketch and the building, research as a prototype.

To develop a digital artefact, as the prototype proposed in this research, many were the moments of monologue that looked like soliloquies reaching different fields: cinema production and films studies, media studies and new media art, computing engineer, history and philosophy, political theory. An overall of fragments of the real that embedded and fed investigative thoughts, both in artistic practice and academic one. All were part of these patches landscape, coming closer or far as the research developed on their proximity, their juxtaposition, their incompatibilities. Trying to develop a diverse system in the process of this research, it was only possible with the collaborations of others.

Daniel Cruz, within the work of his Master Degree in Computing Engineer, developed the computational device, programming the research “sketch”, coding the prototype, the real *locus* of the artefact, its affordances and potentialities, those that have been researched,

¹⁴³ <https://www.incd.pt/> Infraestrutura Nacional de Computação Distribuída. An FCT cluster for research and teaching projects that require computational features.

questioned and proposed through Cinema, History, Media, Art, Political Theory, Philosophy. The process of working with someone else had its difficulties, but also its achievements and outcomes. In the platform, some functionalities are not entirely working and some bugs also. However, it exists, and now it is a prototype to base something else more revised and performative in the near future, accomplishing its most significant features, in a political and artistic perspective. The interdependence of others in such a process appears when dealing with new media and digital technologies as a core practice—referring some key moments.

The longevity of a digital artefact is unpredictable. It is not predictable how digital art endures, and the conscience of this fact had its impact. Although many artists work with precarious materials, and with the essential reference as Thomas Hirschhorn's work to this research, the prevailing idea in tech world corresponds to a horizon where "software is updated", substituted and "incompatible earlier versions" dismissed or "disappear", a regime with implications in politics of uses of digital tools version system and update and modes of production of digital objects and artefacts.

This research experience also echoed in artistic communities and practices, to whom the "technical maintenance" is part of the play and the problem. Consequences from an artistic perspective is that precarious existence of the work if not only a choice is different from ephemeral art or the choice of precarious materials and its implications. Instead, this is a problem of software and compatibility. Programmed obsolescence happens in different orders of objects in digital culture, as seen with Wendy Chun, from material objects to software, which also affects those developed with artistic purposes or critical perspectives, if authors do not master computing technology.

Another observation is that online identities and visibility are mostly commercial, if not speaking of social media networks. Although free sites exist, they constrain free options, programming, features or style possibilities. Lots of WordPress, Joomla, Wix, Tumblr, website templates for artists as Cargo, or even free alternative as <https://www.indexhibit.org/> or other possibilities feed a visuality of online discourses and visual production as diverse. At the present moment software developers work with layers of processed and limited formats, piles of ready-made and closed possibilities to provide answers for sometimes things as simple as where to put a picture in the screen, what size, how to organise a text, the size of the lettering visually. The formatting is rigid, once templates are commodities it selves.

Artists, collectives, PhD researchers, theoreticians produce and vehiculate knowledge, through texts, papers, articles, images, clips in the free blogosphere, as part of this apparent diverse practice. What is relevant here is that this “free self-expression space” online is part of a procedure of ready-mades, plug-ins and premium versions, a “*template presence and update*” logic, essential to understand and think critically in this field. I consider this experience of a hands-on approach practice in the digital environment a relevant achievement, once it is essential to “break the glass” of the opacity of digital ideology and technology, and learn how to disentangle its components in order to understand technological affordances and their possibilities, almost in the sense of basic digital literacy.

CONCLUSIONS

“There is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons.”

Gilles Deleuze, “Post Scriptum to Societies of Control”, 1990

I.

The main aim of this dissertation was to conceptualise on the production of collective portraits of digital protest images and to develop a digital artefact, under Creative Audiovisual and Multimedia Contents in Digital Media research field, and to prototype a digital artefact within this frame. This research addressed its questions, as chapter two reveals, organising a hypothesis towards a “history of the future”, since collective contemporary images, in its explosion, may not correspond to an appearance of “peoples”. Following Georges Didi-Huberman premises in “Peuples Exposés, Peuples Figurants” (2012), this research rationale assumed the task of enquiring modes of recognition of collective images in contemporary conditions of overexposure. According to Didi-Huberman arguments, when a paradoxical disappearance is at risk, even if the right to an image is still not universal, hence those exposed to a rumination of stereotyped images, are also at risk of disappearing.

This study endorsed two paths to this question of dissolution of collective portraits, its reappearance and its possibility to reach those behind such images, addressing an activist strategy dilemma. What digital social movements use means of communication and how to use them? Should activist media use those means imbued in the system, that the groups are mobilising against, or should create completely alternative media options to communicate and articulate group protests and demands?

Both hypothetical circuits were addressed here, first by the use of Youtube.com, as an individual tool of protests, that became a collaborative tool for social movements. A thorough analysis was made on the impacts of these uses, their political importance to a media ecology of digital social movements and a history of contemporary protests. An artefact developed to create an alternative mean of communication, where an activist structure - an activist with aesthetic means - an online video platform recreated Youtube.com possibilities, but in a controlled environment, with specific features, developed from the scratch, within a set of previously presented parameters, inheritors of certain left contemporary art practices and filmmaking traditions.

To appropriately anchor this research, a journey into a double movement of theory and reflexive creative practice took place. The present dissertation is the result of an experimental process in which boundaries and dialectics of media studies, art history, political theory, documentary cinema and digital visual culture, position themselves and gravitate interactively in a possible constellation.

The choice in this research was to assume a questioning of paradoxical existences and practices in a digital interface of visual use as Youtube.com, where questions of software ideology and opacity were scrutinised from its first decade of existence. As analysed in chapter four, Youtube.com longevity and hegemony can be explained as part of a digital culture model. Hence its practices tend to a cultural convergence, where platform algorithm and interface represent a continuous flow of information from unlimited visual resources, rendering in its mediations, not only a visual mediation but a “mass image”(Cubitt, 2016), as for recreation and substitution of different visualities. Despite this processes, this meta-content aggregator has immensely grown in an era of “persistence of visual knowledge” as Wendy Chun (2012) defined, and still considers its core business “participatory culture” (Burgess and Green, 2009). The platform continues to foster diversity in incomes and outcomes, as its fundamental participatory strategy, organised as patronage. Although as analysed, innovative features of the platform, those references to an internet remix culture, have diminished. In a combined strategy of commercial value addition and evolution of the pivotal figure of a content creator, the “tuber”, Youtube.com updated its configurations, specifically those of video edition skills, transforming “Creator Studio”, into minimal incorporated editing software. More focus on “Tubers” personality contents, closer business with music companies, shifts in this constant adaptable online video platform, that has however assumed a role of “*mirror image of actuality*”.

Youtube.com, from the point of view of this study, assumes a position in a crossroads of several configurations, a dynamic structure, an *evolving platform*, once its cultural, political and social impact relies on the paradoxical formation of cultural *digitalities*. As such, by its global presence and universal accessibility, the platform has been a privileged place where protest videos, conflicts and historical events, like those shared during 2011 social movements insurrections, belong to digitally shared historical visualities, among participatory popular and high culture convergence.

Youtube.com images flow analysis leads to some conclusions. Apparatus contains its blockages, at the level of means of production and distribution or access. On a perspective of the *devices* used, hence the proposed path was that of the materials - as “habitual new media” evidence, in Wendy Chun, or habitual gadgets that were crucial to the creation of the movements, as in Joss Hands.

Mobile phones with video cameras and internet access worldwide led to the spread of protest videos in the most prominent platform available, making exponential the videos' dissemination. As in Wendy Chun's theory of “*habitual new media*”, the emancipatory power of mundane technology works against programmed obsolescence of technical objects makes habits relevant. Hence, our ability to regain a human politics of memory against a storage politics of memory struggles for an ephemeral praxis that “fights not only for the right to be forgotten but also the right not to be stored in the first place”.

As the author develops: “This reengagement with memory also entails a change in our habits of using-and our refusal of designs that undermine habituation by turning habits into forms of addiction”. This fact brings our attention and conclusions to a necessary emancipation of habits and “habitual media” devices, creating dissension to the central predominant argument of “programmed obsolescence”, but also installing critical perspectives on interface design and uses, which therefore surpasses usability questions.

These arguments also reenact digital materialities, the path of materials, integrating tools and materials used, as devalued objects and subsequent devalued images in this circuit, from storage information to constituting memory elements. “It means inhabiting and discovering how our habits collect, rather than divide, us”. (Chun, 2016, p. 172). Apparently innocuous gadgets rebelled against its use-value, emancipated and created new “use values”, as *protest use-value* within historical participation in the events, anchored by the subjects of the protests and the movements.

The second element rehabilitated are “poor images”, also transformed in their “use value”, assuming an *emancipatory use*, as part of a historical constitution of collective memory and contributing to the constitution of bottom-up collective portraits. “The emergence of poor images” from protests as 2011, can engage a visuality, as Hito Steyerl writes about Third Cinema manifesto, in an excerpt defending that his author, Juan García Espinosa foresaw the technological affordances of new media potential - “He clearly predicts that the deve-

lopment of video technology will (...) enable some sort of mass film production: an art of the people. Like the economy of poor images, imperfect cinema diminishes the distinctions between author and audience and merges life and art. Most of all, its visuality is resolutely compromised: blurred, amateurish, and full of artefacts.”(Steyerl, 2009). This description matches the corpus of videos collected and analysed here.

A methodology of digital fireflies brought to the forefront these coexistences and their relevance using Georges Didi-Huberman metaphor in “Survivance des Lucioles”, (2009). Somehow, those protest images met in a horizon where “le premier opérateur politique de protestation, de crise, de critique ou d’émancipation”(Didi-Huberman, 2009, p.101). Those were images capable of “franchir l’horizon”, thus, deconstruct, analyse, contest. To “organise the pessimism” in Benjaminian terms, or some sort of “find in the political space, a space of images”.

Central to this argument has been the notion of “image as a temporal agent of survivals, with a political potential about the past, the present and future”. This corpus of images through its retrieval enables, not only a scrutiny of the past or a chronology of the events but also some hypotheses of understanding near futures.

By this gesture are reinforced substantial meanings, intrinsic to those videos, that include the aesthetic qualities evidenced in Rancière and Snowdon. However, this study’s perspective stresses their political strength by their existence *in themselves*. These videos “potes-tas” resides, in the first place, in their diverse and plural experience. Their fragmented happening and longevity in a media landscape system like Youtube.com reinforce their emergent “*emancipatory use value*”, as centrally dependent on the fact that their existence, empowered a subjacent political meaning of the gesture of those who filmed and shared them, belonging to a constituent community of digital protest videos, of digital protest subjects and subsequent digital social movements.

With these individual and collective gestures, different rehabilitations happened, both to the communities of images and the communities of people: the *vernacular as a political sphere*, with autonomy and inner values and the *digital or virtual sphere and its modes of interaction, as an emergent political assembly*, with specific conditions of multimedia *constituent power*.

The relevance to rehabilitate a conception of vernacular values as political practices, as addressed by Peter Snowdon in his article¹⁴⁴, underlines that vernacular values implied an ethic of autonomy, as in Ivan Illich theories. When applying this Ethic to Youtube.com protest videos, it affirms an assumption that these videos were made, within a vernacular notion of non-professional and quasi-anonymous practices. As Peter Snowdon affirms “they are vernacular because they belong to the multiple series of gestures and actions through which individuals gather, both online and offline, to enact the people as the possible subject of another history”. They gather around a simple notion, as interpreted in the analysed corpus of videos - “they are offered not as personal contributions, but as common property”. (Snowdon, 2014, p.411).

Through this idea of *common property* within these images, once this corpus of protest videos was retrieved, a possibility of appearance forms as a collective portrait, through a gesture that reveals a *found collectivity* (Baron, 2013). This *found collectivity* entangles a *vernacular community* of those who made the videos and the videos themselves. A *vernacular community* emancipated as politics, memory and collective. This *vernacular community of images*, gravitating in Youtube.com, has, therefore, the capacity, as a weft, to reveal peoples in protest, in their multimodal and multimedia appearance. The images of the peoples appearing as in Gilles Deleuze definition of *énoncés collectives*, of the *peuple qui manque*.

Thus, what is here proposed concerns a reversing, meaning: if precarious images of these digital fireflies survive, can precarious subjects and their claims, their visions and struggles be rehabilitated too? What can we learn from these images, in their complex and multimedia constitution? Each video I review today addresses the same inequalities, the same systemic structural fractures and the same agency for social change, almost a decade after the events. Nevertheless, this power comes from the people, and it does not exhale from images by themselves. They lead to individuals, to those *bodies in alliance in the streets* that inhabited the “Movements of the Squares”.

The methodology used, a genealogical retrieval of “digital fireflies” from protest movements of 2011, confirmed two different arguments: a subaltern position and a necessity to emancipate these “precarious images” in contemporary visual culture, as part of minor visualities. These Youtube.com “precarious images” are a challenging contribute to an understand-

¹⁴⁴ “The Revolution will be Uploaded: Vernacular Video and the Arab Spring”, Culture Unbound, Volume 6, 2014: 401-429.

ding of a recent past, present and near future, within contemporary “archival impulse” practices, within the challenges of an “evolving platform”, that does not assure their persistence or access. Hence its commercial procedures are priorities.

Thus, there is, from this research, a future work to develop, addressing Youtube.com visual “continent” as part of media ecologies and landscapes of circular visual economy, a horizon comprised by emergent theories as “Finite Media” by Sean Cubitt (2016). Thus, during the research, a powerful encounter happened when addressing contemporaneity from Youtube.com vacant lots. This fact envisions a horizon to explore ways and modes of use of its visual sedimentations from a critical, theoretical and creative perspective, as seen in the examples of Natalie Bookchin or Peter Snowden in this study.

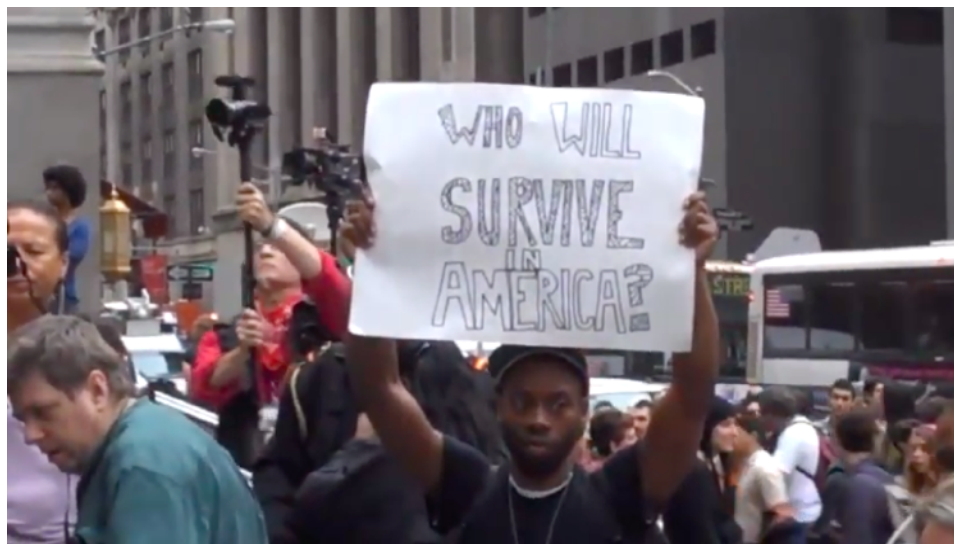


image 74 - still frame from “drum circle at occupy wall street, Zuccotti park, Oct 14, 2011.”

Both paths, the archive and the platform conclude into this direction. Each presents a different strategy. The second strategy, the digital artefact enables a “potential activist interaction”, similar in its possibilities to an online video platform as Youtube.com. An alternative and utopian template of “other spaces” to the type of interactions here analysed.

The protest video remnants of 2011 social movements paralleled a universe of minor materialities, like those used in Thomas Hirschhorn work to shape “political art”. “Critical Laboratory” was a motto to sketch an artefact, as alternative space of organisation of protest images, within theoretical landscapes of “general intellects” constellations.

An exercise of “commonist” activism, developed under an “Articulation of Protest” (Steyerl, 2002), to propose new forms in an online editing table, interrogating modes of political montage. The activist gesture of collective portrait, here essayed, is a prototype, with its features and threads, conceived to address the initial question of dissolution of collective imagery and memory and therefore organise emancipatory actions, intervention near those who participated and filmed their protest videos over the years, as in 2011 uprisings.

The platform exists. Concatenated “social machine”, in Gerald Raunig terms, exists. The *cardboard template* of this project designs and develops, both in realistic and utopian forms, fulfilling the “abstract machine” existence. The cardboard template here produced, can be detached and replicated to other images, other archives, other sources to constitute new *found collectivities* or new *concatenated machines* that do not necessarily originate from the same backgrounds used in this research *scope*. Online video platforms, or in a scaled-up layer, digital visual sources can be reorganised with this *political template*, as an open-source to a weft of other collective visualities, thinking for example on climate change imageries or post-human-mediated images.

II.

Gerald Raunig in “*Changing the production apparatus*.”¹⁴⁵ (2010) goes back to a central text in the field of political art, from where this study delineated a structural strategy. Raunig reading of Walter Benjamin focus “In his essay: “The Author as Producer” Walter Benjamin draws a clear line of distinction between the question of how work relates to the production conditions of its era, a question motivated by content, and the variation of this question that shifts technique, function and production apparatus into the foreground, namely the question of how work is positioned in the production conditions of its era.”¹⁴⁶ (Raunig, 2010).

This proposition remains a fundamental question and a key piece in this puzzle at different levels. Thus, this study, in its double aspects, addresses the constitution of contemporary objects with contemporary techniques. Does not political questioning in Digital Media,

¹⁴⁵ Raunig, Gerald. “Changing the Production Apparatus Anti-Universalist Concepts of Intelligentsia in the early Soviet Union.” *E-Journal Eeipcp*. < <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0910/raunig/en> (2010).

¹⁴⁶ <https://transversal.at/transversal/0910/raunig/en> last accessed in April 2020. Gerald Raunig has a series of short texts that have been present in this study, getting back to one of his original issues, the interventionist soviet avant-garde, and its relations with “The Author as Producer” Benjamin’s text.

mean to address political questions with Digital Media techniques, to work within a *digital political form*? As Benjamin brought to consider and Raunig analysed, soviet interventionists work example, as Sergei Tretyakov, operated a more profound "*change of the production apparatus*" in artistic practices and in his direct relations with participatory notions in art as politics. These are, in "The Author" text, theorised with different consequences, and taken in this study with different amplitudes. Recovered by Gerald Raunig or Hito Steyerl, as Soo Hwan Kim affirms "emerged a new wave of interest in the "factographic" movement within the Soviet avant-garde" (Kim, 2019)¹⁴⁷ embodied in Tretyakov case, here defined as a *Tretyakov itinerary*.

Not only the role of the intellectual in revolutionary processes was considered by Benjamin in Tretyakov example in the text, but also, what is somewhat relevant to conclude in this study, Raunig's effort to focus on a "*change in the production apparatus*" that happens in Tretyakov work and practice, as part of "factography" movement, transposed to contemporary conditions. Hence his work is taken as an example for future landscapes to connections of politics and art. As one of the writers, photographers and designers behind LEF and Novy LEF publications¹⁴⁸, "Left Front of the Arts" magazines, projected "in the mass of worker correspondents, the reporters and amateur photographers, the newspaper and radio-makers, in short, the "factographs"(Raunig, 2000). These theories of workers as participants, led to an interpretation of Walter Benjamin's under Bertolt Brecht influence, (once was Brecht who presented Tretyakov to Benjamin), of assuming in Tretyakov example a hypothetical itinerary to question on the revolutionary role of art into politics and social change, which meant, how to face the rise of fascism in Europe in 1934.

Walter Benjamin interest in Tretyakov, imbued by "*factographic*" practices of soviet past, did not only depend on a *transformation of the use of facts itself* but also, on the *potential use of the facts by everybody*. Therefore, artwork, the object, or the events, could assume "*revolutionary forms*" in its double effort of emerging from diverse factual experiences, but

¹⁴⁷<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/104/298121/sergei-tretyakov-revisited-the-cases-of-walter-benjamin-and-hito-steyerl/> last accessed in April 2020. One relevant aspect of the text, as an evaluation of the reappearance of an interest in Sergei Tretyakov, is the connection with of Hito Steyerl artwork "Freefall" and the life of Boeing 707, as part of a recycle movement, that Kim relates to our familiar concept of "poor images".

¹⁴⁸ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LEF_\(journal\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LEF_(journal)) Last accessed in April 2020. Names and references appear, that interconnect among themselves, as Sergei Eisenstein or John Hartfield that links later to Thomas Hirschhorn. The magazine goals were to "re-examine the ideology and practices of so-called leftist art, and to abandon individualism to increase art's value for developing communism."

also plural authorship of workers, farmers, whoever was part of the process. Since earlier workshops with Sergei Eisenstein, theatrical stagings like “GasWork”, or communal experience in “Communist Lighthouse” kolkoz, Tretyakov dissolute participatory limits as he testifies in his “catalogue of competencies.”¹⁴⁹, becoming a way out to Benjamin’s conundrum.

As described by Raunig, Tretyakov opportunities to experiment with Sergei Eisenstein at Moscow Proletkult in workshops ministered in “Experimental Laboratory of Kinetic Constructions” expanded the conception of the artistic event itself: “All possible forms of a social assembly were to be experimentally tested in the workshops in the course of training: “Conference, banquet, tribunal, assembly, meeting, audience space, sports events and competitions, club evenings, foyers, public cantines, mass celebrations, processions, carnival, funerals, parades, demonstrations, flying assemblies, company work, election campaigns, etc. etc.” (Raunig, 2010). Almost every assembly form could become an art event. From 2011 footage we can also assume a diversity of assembly forms like libraries, to cantines, to squares or parliaments. Also online video platforms, as Youtube.com experience and the proposed artefact, can participate as new forms to these expanded constitutions of political and artistic events definition.

Focusing on the *newspaper* example in the text, “from a leftist author” - Benjamin himself¹⁵⁰- the newspaper production and the connection with their audience was crucial to the “change” of the “production apparatus”. If the newspaper should give corpus also to “*whoever feels himself excluded, whoever thinks he has a right to express his own interests himself*”, it would happen from a dialectical process, already in course in soviet press (believed Benjamin), where - “the difference between author and public, maintained artificially by the bourgeois press, is beginning to disappear. The reader is indeed always ready to become a writer, that is to say, someone who describes or even who prescribes”.

To this shift, one aspect is relevant, authorship comes from literacy, as “an expert—even if not a professional, but only a job-occupant—he gains entrance to authorship. Labour itself speaks out for writing it out in words constitutes part of the knowledge necessary to become an author.” Therefore, political consequence resides in the fact that “*literary competen-*

¹⁴⁹ From collecting money to buy tractors, to belong to military committees, part of Raunig’s text transcribe the answer to “What did I do in the kolkoz?”

¹⁵⁰ reference in a footnote of the text - *Schriften Volume 1*, p. 384.

ce” or literacy, is no longer a privilege of “literary schools” but also becomes “*common property*”.

Thus, literacy, as in digital literacy or visual literacy, embodies empowerment of the use of a technique, writing or using visual skills or online distribution practices, becoming a common property that enables changes in the production apparatus, a reuse of resources, a resistance to a status quo, and emancipation of discourses and political demands.

This *common property resolution* is, in this study, part of a key solution to a central problem in the text, described by Maria Gough in “Paris, Capital of Soviet Avant-Garde.”¹⁵¹ The question of *technique*, that in Gough reading, derives directly from Marx conceptions on the dynamics of relations of production and modes of production, as their “productive contradiction (...) that drives the historical shift from one mode of production to the next”(Gough, 2002). One relevant aspect in Benjamin’s argument is a shift from economic structure to cultural structure. Hence “Benjamin transposes the constitutive contradiction of productive forces and relations from the economic foundation—which is where Marx locates it—to the superstructural realm of cultural production. The form of consciousness that is the work of art is thereby posited as itself a matter of production rather than as a reflection or refraction of the economic base”.

Through Walter Benjamin reading, several considerations can be taken in this study conclusions as part of a contemporary problem. The inscription of an essential role of techniques, when defining the techniques to the correct tendency, from style to modern techniques, and this includes in the text a significant amplitude, in Benjamin’s context, as includes cinema and radio. Nevertheless, there can be said that *general access* is part of a correspondence to emancipatory uses of contemporary techniques. In Digital Media case, its declination in “*habitual new media*” and planetary internet access aggregate these factors as part of an equation, where means of production transform modes of production, and global media literacy by common individuals, as the protesters on the streets, or in updated terms in digital contemporaneity “prosumers as authors”, foster a “change in the production apparatus”.

¹⁵¹ Gough, Maria “Paris, Capital of the Soviet Avant-Garde”, OCTOBER 101, Summer 2002, pp. 53–83, last accessed in April 2020. This essay stresses two different perspectives about “The Author” text: the first an interpretation on the question of “technique” that draws from Marx theory of history, in “A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy”, where concepts of modes of production, means of production and relations of production, based Benjamin’s argument of technique. Another relevant aspect in this essay, is the complexity of the context that surrounded Benjamin at the moment of writing and presenting the text, in the French Left scene and his connections with European intellectuals, as the correspondence with Scholem and Adorno testifies. A para-analysis of Benjamin moves, expectations and imbrications in the text itself, is also remarkable.

Tretyakov, Steyerl, or Hirschhorn, Benjamin and Raunig resonate as ignitors of a potential space, a digital “critical laboratory”, “realistic and utopian”, therefore conducted by a “principle of “collective” hope” of “emancipating general intellects”, empowering makers of meanings and politics, as those who protested and resisted in the streets in 2011 social movements. If in the first section digital materials, devices and images were rehabilitated, here are techniques and producers.

III.

Another account to conclude comes from a will to frame on a broader structure those protest gestures, as part of a system dialectics, where social change is possible, exteriorising the problems addressed here as part of concatenation movements of the social machine itself. To contribute towards a position where these insurrections had and have in historical moments of conflict and crisis the possibility to negotiate power relations.

From an apparatus theory perspective, these power relations on an individual and collective level, the result of the entanglement of multiple assemblies of apparatus lines, that embodies itself its blockage and where *subjectivation* or individuation appears and a new trajectory begins. This point can be the case of the first protester who filmed and shared in Youtube.com Iran's Green movement. It could have been the case also of the first group in Madrid that stayed on the Plaza del Sol and began an acampada, or the Portuguese group of friends that wrote a manifesto and promoted a demonstration. Even the tragic gesture of Mohamed Bouazizi's immolation, a brutal rupture that precipitated a crisis.

From Deleuze reading of Foucauldian apparatus in “What is a dispositif?”(1992) we assume here his argument, where there are different “curves of visibility and curves of enunciation”. “The apparatuses (...) such as Foucault analyses them, are machines which make one see and speak” (p.160). In this interplay between enunciations and regimes of enunciation, trespassed by lines of force, which become lines of power out of knowledge, appear these third lines, those of *subjectivation* that enclose a subjectivity, hence the possibility of breaking the line, a bypass of it, that is at the same time what turns it back on oneself.

Thus, these modes of subjectification encounter pre-existing categories. “(...) a line of subjectification is a process” that is part of social dispositifs, hence the “Self is not Knowledge or Power”, but by contrast, it is from a “process of individuation which bears on groups

and people, and is subtracted from the power relations which are established as constituting forms of knowledge” (Foucault, 2009, p.161). This way, Deleuze brings resistance to the realm of subjectivity, “productions of subjectivity escape from the powers and the forms of knowledge [savoirs] of the social apparatus [dispositif] in order to be reinserted in another, in forms which are yet to come into being” (Deleuze, 1994, p.162). Subjectivation enables other folds into reality, where insurrection and resistance appear. Through subjectivation, individual and collective insurrection and resistance organised the gestures of those that surprised and shifted the trajectory of these third lines, disorganising apparatus itself.

On digital culture conditions that permeated and managed these paradoxical movements, there is a systemic equilibrium anchored in the definition of “*Californian Ideology*.”¹⁵² This movement thrives both technological affordances that empower this built-in system but also its contestation, one that “*promiscuously combines the free-wheeling spirit of the hippies and the entrepreneurial zeal of the yuppies. This amalgamation of opposites has been achieved through a profound faith in the emancipatory potential of the new information technologies*” (Barbrook and Cameron, 1996, p.12).

It mirrors the apparatus paradox. Web implementation power derives from the fact that this *virtual platform* is at the same time “electronic market” and “electronic agora”, and therefore also enables “insurrectional uses” and shapes its modes of production, with creative software tools that were in the first place developed as attention consuming commodities or alienation devices.

“*There is no need to ask which is the toughest or most tolerable regime, for it is within each of them that liberating and enslaving forces confront one another,*” writes Deleuze in his premonitory text “Post Scriptum to societies of control” (1990). Thus it is this balance, a paradoxical one, between libertarian technological enthusiasts and neoliberal entrepreneurs, conquering and settling virtual landscapes in “societies of control”, what keeps Internet going. As the text foresees_ “The ambiguity of the Californian Ideology is most pronounced in its contradictory visions of the digital future.” (op.cit.p.16). As conjunctures of crisis make evident, what kind of power comes from this new communication convergence, defined hence as hypermedia - “(...) the advent of hypermedia will realise the utopias of

¹⁵² There exists a 2015 edition by Networked Cultures Institute, where Richard Barbrook includes this classic text among others, in its 20th anniversary. “The Internet Revolution: From Dot-com Capitalism to Cybernetic Communism”, NCI, Amsterdam, 2015

either the New Left or the New Right? As a hybrid faith, the Californian Ideology happily answers this conundrum by believing in both visions at the same time – and by not criticising either of them”. This “happy conundrum” is as central as PageRank algorithm in this system, both of freedom and control, modelling lines of Power and Knowledge.

What has happened, in 2011, as we know the story, and Manuel Castells tells it so well: “Suddenly dictatorships could be overthrown with the bare hands of the people, (...). Financial magicians went from being the objects of public envy to the targets of universal contempt. Politicians became exposed as corrupt and as liars. Governments were denounced. Media were suspected. Trust vanished.” (Castells, 2012, p.2) Collective action and individual subjectivity reversed network apparatus, and the Web was its incubator “By sharing sorrow and hope in the free public space of the Internet, by connecting to each other, and by envisioning projects from multiple sources of being, individuals formed networks, regardless of their personal views or organisational attachments. They came together.” From the streets and the squares, like Judith Butler’s “bodies in alliance” but also from social media participatory culture, as vernacular Youtube.com practices, self mass communication became a powerful emancipatory force.

As Castells wrote effusively in 2012, social movements of 2011, constituted a “new spatial form of networked social movements”. These were *non-violent movements*, and were “*very political in a fundamental sense*”, an experience that “like many other social movements in history, they have generated their own form of time: timeless time, a transhistorical form of time”. To this author, at that moment, “What these networked social movements are proposing in their practice is a new utopia at the heart of the culture of the network society” (Castells, 2012, p.256).

At that moment, Lanfranco Aceti sketched a definition, already discussed, of “Commonist Art” (Aceti and al, 2014) - “founded (...) on the common that springs from the aggregation around an image, a phrase, a meme or a video, is able to construct something different, a convergence of opinions and actions that can be counted and weighed and that cannot be taken for granted. Could this be a Gramscian utopia of reconstruction and refashioning of aesthetics according to ‘lower commons’?” (Aceti, 2014)

IV.

With this analepsis, comes a remembrance of a *Gramscian enthusiasm* at that time, defining that moment when a bottom-up war of positions and utopian claims of those networked movements “*of outrage and hope*” questioned and promised a “change of the social apparatus” possible new hegemonic configurations. Now, in a pandemic present as a “dress rehearsal.”¹⁵³ of “after climate change” life, where inequalities are exposed by extreme contrast, and with a global presence of a New Right movements in the international scene, these networks of “hopes” seem vanished. Digging Youtube.com videos or sketching activist platforms, there is an open effort to find, as in those movements, “politics in a fundamental sense”. Then a text resonates, revalidating the *Gramscian enthusiasm*, to dark times.

In “Gramsci and Us”, in “Hard Road to Renewal” (1988)¹⁵⁴ Stuart Hall, in a brilliant piece, breaks the glass through the “Thatcher years”, and point by point reminds Antonio Gramsci political philosophy and its renewed contemporaneity throughout crisis conjunctures. As Stuart Hall begins, the Gramsci question, for him, addresses, in the aftermath of a “proletarian moment” that nearly came off, as that of “networks of hope”, a downward momentum. What to do when, as within Gramsci chronology, there is a need to “confront the turning back, the failure, of that moment: the fact that such a moment, having passed, would never return in its old form”? Gramsci came face to face with “the revolutionary character of history itself.”, a sense aligned, in Hall words, with a “discipline of the conjuncture” where the political right had the capacity, then as now, to “*hegemonise the defeat*”. Paralleled in contemporary conditions of technological affordances, that made emerge 2011 social movements, confirming a notion of the historical process, from what happened since the middle 2010s, that we are in the way of a “historic reversal of the revolutionary project, a new historical conjuncture”, a shift in the momentum of digital insurrections.

A direct topic is taken from Gramsci, by Hall, and here also, considers a necessity to face specificity and difference in politics. Where concepts of political positions do not gravitate, from notions of the past, but are an everyday reality, as multiple formations of new “non-political” parties, for example, in Eurozone. Stuart Hall stands for what Gramsci understood as “the notion of difference, to the specificity of a historical conjuncture:” or “how

¹⁵³ Bruno Latour article “Is This a Dress Rehearsal?” in “In the Moment” by Critical Inquiry, about the pandemic by Covid-19, <https://critinq.wordpress.com/2020/03/26/is-this-a-dress-rehearsal/> - last accessed April 2020.

¹⁵⁴ I follow here the text, edited in Verso <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/2448-stuart-hall-gramsci-and-us>.

different forces come together, conjuncturally, to create the new terrain, on which a different politics must form up. That is the intuition that Gramsci offers us about the nature of political life”. Furthermore, hasn't this been repeatedly circular?

As Hall defines about “*Thatcherism*” too, several political projects confront in a “*war of positions*” at the present moment, in an international context, like neoliberal precarization projects, European federalist projects, digital corporate politics, expropriation and environment exploration capitalism projects against eco-social or social state democratic projects. New forms of control concur, trying to dismantle, to engage, to shape forms of authority, of hegemony, dissolving the “*social contract*”, as Castells wrote. Powerful as Hall defined about Thatcher “*The depth of the reversal aimed for was profound: a reversal of the ground-rules of that settlement (...)*”. In our present moment, even a reversal of notions as facts, when emerging terms as “post-truth”.

However, is crucial, in Stuart Hall perspective, to organise a response: “Gramsci's recognition that every crisis is also a moment of reconstruction; that there is no destruction which is not, also, reconstruction; that, historically nothing is dismantled without also attempting to put something new in its place; that every form of power not only excludes but produces something. That is an entirely new conception of crisis and of power.” From crisis, hegemonic order envisions a way to reorganise and expand its hegemony, what had happened in the aftermath of 2008 crisis, when financial and political system reorganised, surpassed other insurrections and continued their route of inequalities, unbalanced politics, precarious labours, life, health to the next crisis. This time, a pandemic crisis and its economic consequences, accentuate the extreme poles of inequality and pervasive precariousness on the war of positions in the contemporary historical bloc.

To understand such *status quo* and its connections with paradoxical entanglements along with this dissertation between corporate media, collective portraits, “poor images”, activist platforms, emancipated protesters, it is necessary to conclude into Gramscian terms, on the contradictory condition of ideologies. What “*Gramsci called an organic (i.e. historically effective) ideology is that it articulates into a configuration different subjects, different identities, different projects, different aspirations. It does not reflect, and it constructs a 'unity' out of difference*”.

Amid this ideological clash, sides are chosen, devices are refunctioned, production apparatus changes are essayed, and collective portraits appear or disappear. As “the political character of our ideas cannot be guaranteed by our class position or by the 'mode of production', but rather a permanent embodiment as a “fragmentary, contradictory nature of common sense”.

For Gramsci, in his “*profoundly expanded conception*” of politics itself it does not exist a “*political arena that reflects unified collective identities*”. Instead are identified networks of forces, that converge to a new cultural level, where Gramsci envisioned “*the formula of 'Permanent Revolution' and the formula of 'civil hegemony'*”.

These 2011 social movements fought on their own terms, the “*war of movements and the war of positions*” and in their failure, act as a remembrance. Failed insurrections persist in their ghostly presence, Tretyakov Factographic works, Eisenstein’s “Battleship Potemkin”, Furio Jesi evocation of the Spartakus Revolt, Chris Marker’s “Le Fond de L’Air est Rouge”.

In Hall’s text, the Gramscian concept of politics expands to diverse fields. Politics is not a dependency, but instead a coexistence of social, cultural, economic and mediatic spheres, a conception of “open-ended” political contingency. As seen before, the Web and digital culture, doubled, projected and liberated some of these possibilities. Where even “vernacular community of images” and “activist machines” can contribute to relations of forces.

A “*Gramscian moment*” therefore is, as in a Gramsci’s definition of crisis, “not an immediate event but a process: it can last for a long time, and can be very differently resolved: by restoration, by reconstruction or by passive transformism”. Thus rehabilitated, the change conditions of the historical bloc appear, within an untimeliness insurrectional temporality. “We can say that a Gramscian moment occurs, in uprising moments, when force relations innovate themselves and recreate a social and political project”. Hegemony is not “a state of grace installed forever”.

Therefore to a continuous questioning that mirrors our contemporaneity, one must continue to ask “what are the political forms through which a new cultural order could be constructed, out of this 'multiplicity of dispersed wills, these heterogeneous aims'. This study was an itinerary proposed in front of these questions.



figure 75 - still frame from "Occupy Wall Street - Interviews and Images from 2011", by Janel gazelle, 2011

These are questions to the images of the "*people yet to come*" who invent themselves and reveal through collective portraits.

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